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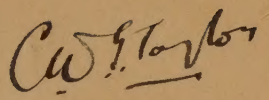

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THE CHRIST OF THE GOSPELS

BY

ARTHUR W. ROBINSON, D.D.

CANON OF CANTERBURY

AUTHOR OF

"STUDIES IN THE TEACHING OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

"Things new and old"

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First published March 1924

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
THE EDINBURGH PRESS, 9 AND 11 YOUNG STREET, EDINBURGH

PREFACE

THE task here attempted is the boldest to which any man can set his hand and his heart. In undertaking it the writer was well aware that in many ways he must fail to rise to the level even of his own conception of what should be accomplished. Nothing but a strong confidence that the time has come when some such endeavour should be made to present afresh the greatest of all the visions of truth, in a form which may in some degree answer to the needs of our modern life, could have led him to think that he ought to place what he might have to offer at the general service. He has tried to put into simple and intelligible shape the thoughts which have come to himself as the result of the eager and anxious inquiries of many years. It will be for his readers to accept what for them is true.

As will be seen, it has not been thought permissible to minimise, much less to set aside, the evidence of the Fourth Gospel. A great many years have passed since the present writer had the privilege of a long talk on theological matters with Dr Westcott, then professor at Cambridge; but he has not forgotten and cannot forget the intensity of the look and the clasp of the hand with which the great teacher bade him farewell on his doorstep with the words: "What should we do without St John?" Much

has happened in the world of criticism since then, and, if there are still certain questions to which it is not easy to give a quite decided reply, we may say with confidence that the tendency of scholarship has been increasingly in the direction of an acceptance of the position which is substantially that of the earliest Christian tradition.

How great is the indebtedness of the following pages to a vast number of thinkers and teachers will be made clear by many acknowledgments and references. It is hoped that justice has been done to arguments and positions which have not been accepted as entirely satisfactory.

The successive chapters are intended to present a continuous view of the main subject, and each of them is followed by "Notes" which consist for the most part of illustrative and confirmatory quotations. These may serve the purpose of answering questions, and giving additional information, as it might be at the close of a lecture. It will probably be best that the consideration of the "Notes" should be deferred until the chapter to which in each case they belong has been read.

THE PRECINCTS, CANTERBURY,
January 1924.

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And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought.

THE CHRIST OF THE GOSPELS

I

THE FUNCTION OF THE GOSPELS

Not long ago, some of the best and ablest of the students at a women's college had opened an evening class for men in a poor and neglected neighbourhood. They were stirred by an impulse to do what they could for their less fortunate brothers. They read to them, sang to them, taught them to read and write; and the men came in increasing numbers. After a few months they asked them whether there was anything in particular they would like to hear more about. There was a silence, and then a low and scarcely audible voice was heard. One of the women went up to the speaker. "What was it you wanted specially to hear about?" "Could you tell us," was the man's reply, "something about the Lord Jesus Christ?" (*Note* 1.)

The deeper needs of our human nature do not often get themselves articulately expressed. For the most part they are hidden beneath the heavy weight of our conventionalisms. But, if we search and listen for them, we may sometimes discover what they are; and we shall be most likely to do so where life is at its simplest and sincerest, in the child, in the poor, in the sufferers.

Not indeed that this particular want is confined to any age or class. Those whose knowledge of history and of human nature has been widest and most penetrating have confessed to a longing which they would be at no small cost to satisfy. "I am only a poor man," Carlyle is reported to have said to Holman Hunt, "but I can say in serious truth that I would give one-third of all I possess for a veritable contemporaneous representation of Jesus Christ." We are to endeavour to see by what means, and to what extent, this deepest need of our nature is to be met.

There have been artists who have devoted much time and care to the study of the portraits of Christ, as these have appeared throughout the long history of the centuries, and some of them have resolutely maintained that these portraits exhibit the persistence of a single type of face which can be traced back so far as to render it conceivable that it may bear the impress of an original memory. (*Note* 2.) We need not refuse to admit the interest of such inquiries, nor need we be ungrateful to those who have pursued them, even though we may feel that we are more likely to be repaid for our pains if we expend them in another direction. We shall greatly fail in the attempt we are to make if it does not leave us with the conviction that the provision for the knowledge of our Lord which we have in the Gospels is such that we can imagine no other that we could be willing to substitute for it.

Before we proceed with our examination of the materials supplied by the Gospels, it will be of

interest and importance that we should try to answer a question which almost inevitably arises when we think of the form in which these materials have come down to us. It is not mere curiosity that leads us to ask, Why are there as many Gospels as there are? Why is there not one straightforward, continuous narrative such as not a few more recent writers have taken in hand to make? Would not this have been simpler and clearer? Might we not in this way have been saved from certain difficulties and perplexities that are wont to baffle us now when we attempt to reconcile varying and often, as it would seem, conflicting accounts? Why, then, were there four Gospels?

That the question is a natural one is proved by the fact that it was raised a long time ago. As far back as the second century it was asked, and answered, by Irenæus. His answers, for he gave several, were not of the kind that we should consider very convincing to-day. He urged that, as there are "four regions of the world," and "four principal winds," and "four faces of the Cherubim," and "four general covenants" given to mankind, so of necessity there must be four Gospels, no more and no less! "It is impossible," he declared, "that the Gospels should be in number either more or fewer." (*Note* 3.)

Such attempts to solve the problem strike us, no doubt, as quaint and fanciful. But they have, at all events, this extraordinary interest; they show us how early and how deeply settled the conviction was as to the number and position of the Gospels. It was even then accepted as indisputable that there

were four authoritative Gospels, and we are left in no doubt that they were the same that we have to-day. The value of that testimony can scarcely be over-estimated. (*Note* 4.)

But how are we to set about answering the question, Why were there four Gospels, in a fashion that is likely to be more intelligible and satisfactory to ourselves ?

There are several answers that may be suggested. The first is that which appeals to our sense, our quite modern sense, of historical fitness. A full provision for the knowledge of Christ would have had to be adapted to the widely varying types of the men who made up the world which was to be called to His feet. There is an old tradition that the Lord when He was on earth appeared differently to different beholders. What is certainly true is that each race was capable of appreciating one particular form of presentation much more readily than another.

To take the Jew first. He had his special training, and his peculiar temperament. If he was to be impressed, it would have to be by one of his own race. His teacher must be a man full of reverence for the Old Testament, and well versed in the Jewish customs. It would be all the better if his circumstances had fitted him to interpret the providential ordering of the stage that had then been reached in the history of his people.

Next came the Roman, at that time the master of the world. Jewish rites and controversies would have no sort of interest for him ; he " cared for none of these things." But he had heard of a remarkable

leader who had appeared in Syria, and had been tried by his procurator. He was aware that He had claimed a more than ordinary authority, and had possessed extraordinary powers. He would like to hear more about Him ; what sort of person He really was, what He had said, and what He had done.

And, once again, there was the Greek, with wants and requirements of a very different order. His tastes were fastidious ; he lived in a world of large ideas, and his sympathies were wide in their range. He would need to be approached by a countryman of his own ; and it would be indispensable that it should be one who had received a training in accurate thinking, and was gifted with a literary sense. If, in addition, it could be arranged that he should have been brought under the influence of an exceptionally large-minded Christian teacher, his qualifications for his task would be singularly complete.

How all these requirements were met and fulfilled we shall presently see. For the moment it must be enough to say that, the more we look into the matter, the more we can recognise that there were historical causes at work to account for the shape in which the Gospels originally appeared.

And there is another consideration which should forcibly appeal to us. We are well aware of the importance of confirmatory testimony. Especially when great issues are at stake, we are wont to ask that we may be supplied with evidence drawn from more than one quarter. A single account does not carry the weight of consentient records from several witnesses.

That the four Evangelists give us information derived from at least as many different sources will be shown when we come to treat them in detail. It may suffice to say generally now that we seem to be justified in recognising in the first Gospel a certain document that was originally composed in Aramaic. (*Note* 5.) This was subsequently combined with a large amount of material that had been derived from a quite independent source. That was no other than our Gospel of St Mark. Until comparatively recently this, the shortest of the Gospels, had been regarded as nothing more than an abbreviated version of St Matthew and St Luke. It is now universally accepted that the very reverse of this is the truth, and that it is the brief and vigorous narrative of our second Evangelist which was the framework within which the other two arranged for the most part what they themselves had to contribute. (*Note* 6.)

In St Luke we can discover indebtedness to the original work of St Matthew as well as to the recollections which had come through the instrumentality of St Mark. (*Note* 7.) To these he himself has added a good deal of information that he had accumulated as the result of his own investigations.

Here, then, we have at least three documents upon which to rely when we are seeking to establish the validity of the facts that are vouched for by the earlier Evangelists. When we come to deal with the Johannine Gospel, we shall give reasons for thinking that in it we have a still further independent testimony by which to test and supplement the records of its predecessors. (*Note* 8.)

So far we have been considering two answers that might very well occur to us as satisfactory replies to the old question—Why are there four Gospels? If they do not take us the whole way they certainly point us in the direction in which an explanation may be found. And there is another answer which we may perhaps think even more suggestive and helpful. What it is can be told most briefly and effectively by the use of an illustration.

In our National Gallery are to be seen three representations on a single canvas of the features of Charles the First. In one the head is turned to the right, in another to the left, while that in the centre gives the full face. The story of their production is interesting. They were painted by Vandyck to be sent to Bernini, the sculptor in Rome, that he might by their help make a bust of the king. It was rightly judged that, by combining the impressions so received, he would be the better able to produce a life-like and "speaking" likeness. (*Note* 9.)

By a happy thought it has been suggested that the Gospels may have been intended to serve just such a purpose as was meant to be served by these portraits. From the Gospels we are able to recall the various aspects of our Lord's life when on earth. Is it not true to say that in them we have portraits, in one of which the Face is to be seen turning towards the past, in another to the present, in yet another to the future; and then a fourth, such as no ordinary artist could give us, revealing the timeless life within? By the help of them all we can alter our point of view and obtain from one what

another has left in shade. In this way it is possible to attain a result—shall we say, a stereoscopic effect ?—that could never have been attained from any single representation.

We cannot better describe what we are about to attempt than by saying that we are to try to study what the Gospels have to tell us just in this way. What is to come of our effort will be seen as we proceed. Meanwhile we may call to mind the words, often quoted, of the cultured and scholarly Erasmus, written nearly four hundred years ago :

" These most sacred writings bring back to you a living image of His mind, the very Christ speaking, healing, dying, rising ; in fact so wholly present that you would see less of Him if you beheld Him before your eyes ! "

If only, in any real degree, that may be so, we shall be left in no doubt as to the chief and most abiding function of the Gospels.

NOTES

1. This incident was related by a preacher before the University of Cambridge.

2. Those who may wish to see what has been attempted in this direction should refer to *The Likeness of Christ, Being an Inquiry into the verisimilitude of the received likeness of our Blessed Lord* by T. Heaphy, edited by W. Bayliss, F.S.A. (1886). The writer thinks he has made good his claim to speak of " ancient productions executed at a time when they

would have been brought under the notice of many who had seen the Lord" (p. 80).

3. Irenæus, *Contr. Haer.* iii. 8. Irenæus was born about 130 and wrote about 180 A.D.

4. "By the time of Irenæus there is a stable equilibrium; no one of the four Gospels is either before or after another."—Dr Sanday, *Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 255.

5. The statement that "Matthew composed the oracles (*logia*) of the Lord in the Hebrew tongue," was made in his old age by Papias, who was born about 60-70 A.D. As it is clear that our St Matthew is not a Greek translation of an Aramaic, or Hebrew, book, the words of Papias have commonly been supposed to refer to a collection of discourses derived from the Apostle, which was subsequently incorporated into what was therefore described as "the Gospel according to Matthew." But perhaps his statement has been interpreted in too narrow a sense. It ought to be noted that, in a subsequent reference to St Mark's Gospel, Papias employed the same term *logia*, and appeared to regard it as the equivalent of "things spoken and done."—See Lightfoot, *Essays on Supernatural Religion*, p. 175.

6. That St Mark was used by St Matthew and St Luke is "the one solid contribution which the scholarship of the nineteenth century has made towards the solution of the Synoptic problem."—Prof. Burkitt, *Two Lectures on the Gospels*, p. 46.

7. Much inquiry has been directed of late to the question whether or not there may have been a common document, other than St Mark, which was used by St Matthew and St Luke. This supposed document is generally referred to as "Q." But the attempts at its reconstruction have not been convincing; and it is possible that the ultimate conclusion may be that its contents were "probably the work of the Apostle Matthew." (Canon Streeter, *Foundations*, p. 82.)
8. "Sixty years ago David Frederick Strauss thought he had almost entirely destroyed the historical credibility, not only of the fourth, but also of the first three Gospels as well. The criticism of two generations has succeeded in restoring that credibility in its main outlines."—Harnack, *What is Christianity?* p. 21.
9. Unfortunately the bust would seem to have perished in the fire at Whitehall.

II

THE FIRST EVANGELIST

THE problems connected with St Matthew's Gospel are as intricate as they are interesting. It cannot be said that we have yet arrived at a complete solution of them. The Gospel has always stood first in collections of the Gospels, but this does not necessarily mean that it was the first to be written. Its place is an evidence of an early belief that it was the work of an Apostle. Possibly also there was a feeling that the nature of its contents made it fitting that it should stand at the head of the New Testament books, in immediate succession to those of the Old; and such a feeling would be encouraged by the tradition that the Gospel was originally composed in the Hebrew tongue.

It is here that the difficulties begin. The Gospel bears no traces of having been a translation. On the contrary, there would seem to be convincing proof that it was written, as we have it, in Greek. This in itself might not preclude the possibility that St Matthew was its writer, for we have other instances of works that were first composed in Hebrew and then in Greek. (*Note* 1.) What does make it difficult to attribute the Gospel in its present form

to St Matthew is the now generally accepted conclusion that a large part of it was directly derived from St Mark. This result of modern critical investigation is so well established that few would think of disputing it.

If that is to be taken for granted, the question must arise as to whether it is conceivable that an Apostle and eyewitness would go for his information to a writer who was neither. The difficulty is, no doubt, made less if it can be shown that St Mark was acting as the mouthpiece of an Apostle, and if there is reason to think that the material so borrowed has been handled with a judgment and freedom that could only naturally belong to one who, being also an Apostle, had a right to act as an independent authority.

Before the matter can be settled there is another consideration which must certainly be taken into account.

The more the Gospel is studied, the stronger is the impression made upon us of a unity in its character and design. It does look as if it had proceeded from a single mind, and that of a man who had been very specially trained and fitted for a particular task. It is doubtful whether sufficient justice has yet been done to this side of the matter. If we are bound to be true to one set of the facts, we are equally bound to give impartial attention to the other. If we do so, we may be inclined to believe that, while the Gospel was possibly edited by another, its real author was the Apostle by whose temper and spirit the whole work is pervaded and penetrated.

Let us then think of St Matthew, the man, before we pass on to think more particularly of what we may, at all events in a general sense, regard as his communication. And here, again, we may find that there is some need for a reconsideration and revision of the commonly accepted opinions.

It may be questioned whether most of us have got over the feelings of suspicion and hostility that were aroused in us by the associations which we have been accustomed to connect with his occupation and calling.

St Matthew, when we are first introduced to him, is sitting at his table by the great lake road, " the way of the sea," collecting tolls for his Roman, or quasi-Roman, employers. It is safe to say that he was the very last kind of man whom the religious world of that day would have dreamt of choosing to be a teacher of the soul. It is not easy to realise the bitterness of prejudice that then existed against such a man.

The Holy Land was under the domination of the foreign power. The Jewish people despised and detested the usurpation, and bore it only in the confident belief that it was soon to be overthrown. The hero in popular estimation was the Zealot who most outrageously defied the oppressor. All his acts were readily condoned. At the other end of the scale stood the man with soul so dead that he could cast off all considerations of piety and patriotism, and stoop to do the work of " the Castle " at Jerusalem or Tiberias. The fact that he was well paid for doing it, made the contempt that was felt for him only the deeper.

The publican, or tax-gatherer, was classed with the heathen and the sinner. And we dare not forget that the general estimate in such matters is usually correct. That is to say, it nearly always is the case that a class becomes what it is supposed to be. That is the awful power of imputed unrighteousness. The despised tend to be the despicable. In those days there might have been a pious publican, but the probability was small.

For an ordinary religious leader it would have been a fatal thing to have selected a Matthew as a disciple. But our Lord was not an ordinary religious leader, and there are exceptions to every rule. In the light of what we know we may venture to say that, to the eye that could see deep enough, there were qualities in this publican which gave promise of far from common possibilities of service. We may go further and maintain that there were in him, even at the time of his call, the unmistakable indications of a genuine saintliness.

Take that most obvious of all the marks of a saint—*unworldliness*. There can be no question that St Matthew had this mark. The very instant the touchstone of sincerity was applied, and he was summoned to leave his money and the means of making it, he responded with the utmost alacrity. Nay more, he was filled with such gladness that he thought it the occasion for a feast! We could not easily find a parallel to that. Surely it showed that the man's heart was in the right place, and made it clear where his treasure was stored.

Then it is to be noticed that he had also that other unfailing characteristic of the saintly character—the

stamp of *humility*. The quality in his case was plainly shown. While other Evangelists describe the call of a publican named Levi, it is left to Matthew himself to indicate that he was that person. (*Note* 2.) And, while in the lists of the Apostles in the other Synoptic Gospels the fourth pair consists of "Matthew and Thomas," in the first Gospel the order is given as "Thomas and Matthew." Is it quite unreasonable to suggest that it may have been this same modesty that led him to attach so much importance to, and to follow so willingly, the leading of St Mark? If it be said that these evidences are of a date later than his call, we must remember that humility is a plant of slow growth and that its roots go deep down and far back. (*Note* 3.)

But we may naturally ask, how had it come to pass that a man of this sort should be engaged as he was? The answer to that question may carry us even further towards the understanding of his character and outlook. The world judged that any man in his position must of necessity be unpatriotic and disloyal. Yet there have been instances enough to prove that the truest patriotism is not always of the kind that is conventionally approved. And it has not rarely happened that the true patriotism of one age has become the false patriotism of the next.

There is a most notable instance of this in the history of Israel. In the time of Isaiah the true patriot said "Resist at all hazard. Do and dare. Whatever the odds against you, God will be mighty on your behalf. Fear not."

But in Jeremiah's day it was the false prophets who spoke like that. The true patriot said, "Submit, accept humiliation, acquiesce in defeat. The only right policy is that of non-resistance. Pray for your oppressors, and serve them. Seek their well-being, and in it find your peace, so long as God wills." That was a hard doctrine to deliver to excited contemporaries, and it needed a brave man to live it and preach it.

What if Matthew was this finer and rarer sort of patriot? It is significant that he seems to have been specially drawn to the writings of Jeremiah. There are as many as seven allusions to these. As a matter of fact, he is the only New Testament writer who expressly mentions that prophet; and once, singularly enough, he has him so much in his thoughts that he gives him as an authority where he should have referred to another.

What if Matthew had really understood the purpose of God in allowing His people to be brought under the yoke of the foreigner, and had felt it to be a duty to accept the political situation? What if he had a juster conception of the salvation of God than the Scribes and Pharisees with all their boasted devotion? If so, would not our Lord have seen in him a fit instrument to be chosen as the Evangelist of the heavenly and spiritual kingdom?

There is no reason to suppose that St Matthew was a man of remarkable intellectual ability. But he was evidently a diligent student of the Scriptures, and was quick to discover spiritual analogies and sequences. He had, moreover, some other quali-

fications of a valuable kind. He could speak two languages; the Greek of his employers, as well as the Aramaic of his countrymen. He could write, and he had been trained in business ways. Possibly it was with an allusion to his efficiency in these respects that our Lord is reported to have said, "Be tried money-changers," good business men. Then, too, it has often been noticed that the writer of the first Gospel was a man of method and arrangement, fond of gathering his materials into groups of discourses, and parables, and miracles. Did this show the force of habit in a man who had grown accustomed to seeing his piles of money before him? It is interesting to notice how many references are made to money in this Gospel. There are nine in all, six different coins being mentioned. Here only are the Lord's exact instructions given—"provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses"; and here only are we told of the tribute money at Capernaum, of the coin in the fish's mouth, of the sum which was paid to Judas, and of the money that was given to the guard.

Then, also, it could not have been without advantage that as a minor official this man had seen something of the working of the mightiest Empire that the world had known. Might not this experience also be turned to account in the case of the Evangelist of a yet more far-reaching order?

"The stone that is fit for the wall will not be left in the way." After much waiting, at last the opportunity came; and Matthew was shown to be what his name signified, a "gift of God," a veritable God-send to the Church and to the world.

Let us pass now from the Evangelist to the Gospel which, as we may believe, rightly bears his name.

The Gospel is pre-eminently Jewish, and that in the deepest and most spiritual sense. In its own phrase, three times employed, it is " the Gospel of the Kingdom " ; that Kingdom which was the fulfilment of Jewish institutions and prophecies, and is to be the foundation upon which all human society must eventually stand. Other Evangelists speak of " the Kingdom of God " ; St Matthew alone of " the Kingdom of Heaven." He uses the expression thirty-two times. This was no doubt due in some measure to a traditional reverence which shrank from a too frequent employment of the Divine name ; but there may have been another reason as well. A kingdom of earth, a secular sovereignty, might be God's kingdom, for He rules over all ; but " the Kingdom of Heaven " is God's kingdom in a yet profounder sense. It is not of this world, not based on material forces, but won by means the very opposite of those which are commonly relied upon ; a spiritual kingdom, with a glory of its own.

We shall, however, make a great mistake if we imagine the theme of the Gospel any idea however transcendent. Its unfaltering aim is to proclaim and do honour to a Person. We have but to turn the pages of the book to be assured that in it the promise and hope of a kingdom is wholly dependent upon the coming and manifestation of the King.

At the very outset, His genealogy is traced, according to the legal reckoning, through David and

Solomon. (*Note* 4.) Before long we hear the inquiry, "Where is He that is born King?" and are told of the tribute that was brought to Him from afar. It is significant that, when the forerunner appears, he announces (here only) that "the Kingdom is at hand." It is in this Gospel that the Temptation culminates in the offer and rejection of the kingdoms of the world. It is here that we have set out in full the great manifesto which opens with the Blessings of the Kingdom; here that we read of the promise of the keys of the kingdom, of the marriage of the King's son; and here, in the parable of the sheep and the goats, that we have the only passage in which our Lord definitely assumes to Himself the title of King.

St Matthew is not, of course, alone in his accounts of the tragic circumstances of the Passion; but he makes us feel that in the mock array, the crown of thorns, the sceptre, and the title over the Cross, we have a witness, though it be only of scorn and insult, to the regal claim. And there are added certain special accompaniments of majesty; the trembling earth, the soldier guard, the escort of saints, and the worship of disciples.

The Resurrection follows as an inevitable sequel of the history; and the climax is reached by the announcement of a great imperial commission proclaiming "all authority" over "all nations," for all time, even to "the consummation of the ages." It may be noted that this last phrase is used not less than five times in this Gospel; and only once besides in the New Testament, and then by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, whose

purpose it was to unfold the accomplishment of the hope of Israel. (*Note* 5.)

It remains that we should try to gather what it is that St Matthew has specially to tell us of the character of Him who holds the supreme office and fills the great part of the King. So only shall we learn the whole significance of his message to his own people, and so only shall we be able to recognise the peculiar contribution that this Gospel has to make to our knowledge of our Lord.

What then are the prominent lineaments in St Matthew's portrait of Christ? We shall not be wrong in saying that they are two, both of them unmistakably regal. The first is *severity*. When Dean Church said that "the New Testament is a severe book," he may well have been thinking more particularly of St Matthew. His work bears upon it the evident stamp of a great seriousness. On no book of the Bible do so many shadows lie. At greater length than elsewhere we are told in it of the doom that awaits the impenitent Jerusalem; in a single chapter there are seven terrible woes against the Scribes and Pharisees. Here only, and that twice, do we read of the "many called and few chosen"; and of those that shall "come from the east and from the west" to take the places of "the children of the kingdom" who are cast out. Here only are we told of "the love of many" which is to "wax cold"; and here only of the reckless malice of the men who invoked the Blood of their Victim upon themselves and their children.

"More than the rest of the Evangelists," it has

been truly said, St Matthew " seems to move among a race of backsliders : among dogs and swine unworthy of the pearls of truth : among the tares sown by the enemy, among fishermen who must cast back again many of the fish caught in the net of the Gospel. 'The broad way' is mentioned by him alone and the multitude of those that go thereby, and the guest without the wedding garment, and the foolish virgins, and the goats, and those who even ' cast out devils ' in the name of the Lord and yet are rejected by Him because they ' work lawlessness.' " (*Note* 6.)

We certainly do not understand the book unless we have apprehended this characteristic of it. Throughout its pages we are continually confronted by a tremendous alternative. There is a choice that has to be made. We are left in no doubt that we are in the presence of One who must be faced as the Judge by all who refuse to accept Him as the King. Are we not bound to acknowledge that this note of severity is greatly needed to-day to add strength and majesty to the popular conception of the Person of Christ ?

But, having said so much, we must hasten to add that those will form a quite erroneous impression who imagine that there is nothing in what St Matthew has written but sternness and sadness. His work is indeed a Gospel, a message of good tidings. If there is a royal justice, there is also a royal mercy ; and, if the first note of the Gospel of the Kingdom is severity, its second is *tenderness*.

Nowhere else are there such revelations of the care of the Heavenly Father for His children and

His flowers. It is here only that we read of the angels that wait on the little ones. Here, if not only here, are those words of infinite pathos in view of the impending storm—" O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

Here and here alone are the comfortable words which have in themselves been a Gospel to multitudes: " Come unto Me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

> " So, the All-Great were the All-Loving too—
> So, through the thunder comes a human voice
> Saying, 'O heart I made, a heart beats here!
> . . . . . .
> And thou must love Me who have died for thee!'"

Surely, it is this blending of tenderness and severity, of mercy and judgment, that has made this Gospel so " immeasurably effective." We can see that it must have had a most powerful message for those to whom it was originally addressed, and we can comprehend how, all through the centuries, it has been aweing, subduing, training men and women for Christ and His Kingdom. Renan did not go beyond the facts when he described it as " all things considered, the most important book of Christianity—the most important book that has ever been written." (*Note* 7.)

NOTES

1. Josephus says that he wrote his *History of the Jewish War* first in Aramaic and then in Greek.

2. That St Matthew fully realised the opprobrium attached to the term " publican " is made plain by his association of the words " a heathen and a publican " (xviii. 17).

3. We shall do well to recall Keble's well-known lines for St Matthew's day in the *Christian Year*. It would seem that the poet can be claimed as supporting the view we have taken of the " meek publican's " character.

> " Say, when in pity ye have gazed
> On the wreathed smoke afar,
> That o'er some town, like mist upraised,
> Hung hiding sun and star,
> Then as ye turned your weary eye
> To the green earth and open sky,
> Were ye not fain to doubt how Faith could dwell
> Amid that dreary glare, in this world's citadel ? "

Then follows the magnificent rejoinder :

> " There are in this loud stunning tide
> Of human care and crime
> With whom the melodies abide
> Of the everlasting chime ;
> Who carry music in their heart
> Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,
> Plying their daily task with busier feet,
> Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat."

4. Seven times in this Gospel is our Lord described as " the Son of David."

5. Not a little controversy has arisen with respect to the charge to use the Threefold Name in Baptism, as recorded in xxviii. 19. Some have urged that the language thus employed points to a late date and to the influence of later liturgical custom.

   It is worth while to recall the characteristic words of F. D. Maurice in regard to this matter. Speaking of St Matthew's Gospel, he said, " It would not be the fulfilment of the past if it did not bring forth the Son of David and the Son of Abraham saying, ' All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth ' ; if the promise, ' in thee and in thy seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed,' had not been translated into the words ' teach all the nations '; if the name of the I AM, which was the ground of the national polity, had not been expanded into the Name of ' the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,' the foundation of the universal Family."—*Unity of the New Testament*, p. 197.

   To this may be added a judgment given from the more definitely critical standpoint. " As it seems to me, the employment of the Threefold Name in Baptism arose in connexion with the evangelisation of the heathen ; and it is not without significance that in Matt. xxviii. 19, it is closely associated with the charge to ' make disciples of all nations.' "—Dr V. H. Stanton, *The Gospels as Historical Documents*, ii. p. 357.

6. Dr E. A. Abbott, Art. *Gospels* in *Encyc. Bibl.* ii. 1788.

7. *Les Evangiles*, p. 212. Renan goes on to say, "The compilation of the Gospels is, next to the personal action of Jesus, the leading fact in the history of the origins of Christianity; I will even add, in the history of mankind."

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III

THE SECOND EVANGELIST

The first thing that strikes us on looking at the Gospel of St Mark is its brevity. It is by far the shortest of the four. The next thing we observe, when we regard it with attention, is that it contains very little which is not to be found elsewhere ; some two or three incidents, a couple of miracles and one parable ; in all not more than twenty-four verses, or about seven per cent. of the whole. We might be inclined to suppose that it is only an epitome of St Matthew and St Luke, and that not a great deal would have been lost if it had not come down to us. And we should find some justification for such an estimate in the opinion of the early Church. Not that there is any trace of a doubt as to the admission of the Gospel into the number of the canonical books ; but there is reason for thinking that, if the early Christians had been asked which of the Four Gospels could have been best spared, they would have said the Second. St Augustine, for instance, spoke of St Mark as a " breviator," and it was clearly his opinion that this Evangelist had made an abridgment of what he had read more fully set out by the others. An even plainer testimony is borne by the

fact of the well-known uncertainty in regard to the last twelve verses of the Gospel. The present conclusion is generally admitted to have been supplied to fill a gap, after the words, "they were afraid," with which the original text ended. (*Note* 1.) This means, either that the Gospel was left unfinished at this point, which is unlikely; or that there was a time when only a single copy was known to exist and this, through want of care, so damaged as to have lost its final leaf. If that were so, we may legitimately draw the inference that in the early days those who possessed the other Gospels felt that they contained all that was essential of St Mark's. This view of the comparative unimportance of the Gospel was commonly held until a very recent time. Now the opinion of scholars has completely veered round. It is a remarkable instance of justice deferred, and rendered in full after long delay.

To-day no one of the Gospels is seen to have had a clearer purpose of its own, and to be of more lasting value for the contribution it has to make when we are endeavouring to gain a clear impression of what our Lord was like.

What can be known of the Evangelist himself may be quickly told.

Mark was probably a native of Jerusalem, where his mother had a house. He was the cousin of Barnabas, a landowner of Cyprus. From the first therefore he had been brought into contact with foreign influences. He must have had some means, for he was in a position to travel. His mother's house was a large one, if it was, as has been reason-

ably conjectured, that which contained the Upper Room of the Last Supper. John Mark—to give him his full name—was brought, through his cousin, into association with St Paul. But it was with St Peter that he was more intimately connected. St Peter speaks of him affectionately as "my son." To Mark's mother's house Peter naturally turned when he was released from prison.

Quite possibly he was personally acquainted with our Lord. An old tradition declared him to have been among those who turned back when they heard the "hard saying" of St John vi. 60. Modern exegesis has seen in him the young man, of whom he alone tells, who appeared in night attire in the Garden, on the night of our Lord's arrest. He had hastened, perhaps, to give warning of danger, having overheard some hints of it when the conspirators went, as they may well have gone, first to the house where Judas had left his Master and fellow-disciples at the Supper table. It is significant that the young man should have turned and fled. This reminds us of the Mark who deserted St Paul on his first missionary journey.

If Mark's home was the house of the Last Supper, one other interesting identification may follow. Mark may have been the man carrying the pitcher, for whom our Lord told His messengers to look out. The traditional site of the house is on the side of Jerusalem which overhangs the valley of the Kedron, near the bottom of which is the Pool of Siloam. The steepness of the hill might explain the unusual fact that a man, rather than a woman, was carrying the water. If it was done to help his mother, we

have in the act a testimony to the active, serviceable nature of the man himself.

And this is the impression we get from all we know of St Mark. He was not a born leader : it was his function to follow and serve. Alone he might not have done great things, but under direction his good qualities could be turned to excellent use. Though he was sometimes unnerved, his heart was in the right place. He was energetic and useful. Barnabas was not unreasonable when he wanted St Paul to give him another chance. And it is touching to note St Paul's final reference to him—the words were nearly the last we have from him—" Take Mark, and bring him with thee : for he is profitable to me for ministry."

There is a general agreement that St Mark's Gospel was intended for Roman readers ; and the old tradition is accepted that it was written at Rome. (*Note* 2.) Among the other indications of such a connexion, attention has been called to the mention in the Gospel of one of whom we read elsewhere as a Roman resident. It is natural to suppose that, when St Mark writes of Simon of Cyrene, the man who was impressed to carry the Cross, as the father of Alexander and Rufus, he was referring to the same Rufus to whom St Paul had alluded at the end of his Epistle to the Romans. Such a reminder would serve as a useful corroboration of the truth of the history. And there are more substantial grounds on which to rest the conviction that the object of St Mark was to make our Lord understood and appreciated by the Roman mind.

We have good reasons for the belief that the

Gospel was produced under the controlling influence of St Peter, the Apostle who was the first to be commissioned to preach the Christian message to a Roman. One of the oldest and most trustworthy of Christian traditions represents St Mark as the interpreter of St Peter, and as the author of a collection of memoirs which gave the substance of St Peter's teaching. (*Note* 3.) That the two were associated in work at Rome itself may be accepted as a matter beyond reasonable doubt. (*Note* 4.)

And there can be no doubt that the Gospel itself supplies evidence which amply establishes the connexion with St Peter. Again and again we meet in it with references to the Apostle that are not to be found elsewhere. His house is the centre of operations at Capernaum ; the names of those present at the healing of his wife's mother are only recorded here ; it is Peter who calls attention to the fig tree that had withered ; and it is in this Gospel alone that the injunction after the Resurrection is given in the form—" Go, tell His disciples, and Peter."

So also, as was early made a matter of comment, incidents are omitted which would have tended to the glorification of St Peter ; as for example, the story of the miraculous draught of fishes, of his walking on the sea, of the finding of the coin in the fish's mouth " for Me and thee " ; and of his confession of faith at Cæsarea Philippi, with the subsequent bestowal of the " keys."

On the other hand, things are recorded that were manifestly to his discredit, *e.g.*, the rebukes " Get thee behind Me, Satan," " Simon, sleepest thou ? ",

and the damaging fact that the cock had to crow twice before St Peter's conscience could be stirred.

Even more significant is the remarkable way in which the Gospel fills out the sketch of our Lord's ministry that, as we have already observed, St Peter himself drew for the Roman soldier Cornelius. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him"—that has been well described as "St Mark's Gospel in a nutshell."

We must all agree that a Gospel which was likely to win the Roman to the obedience of Christ would have to be marked by a distinct character of its own.

The Roman was a very different person from the Jew. His genius was that of strong common sense. His religion was "the most practical that ever existed." He would have no interest in tracing beliefs back into the past; legal genealogies and fulfilments of prophecy would leave him cold. Jewish dogmas and ceremonial disputes, he could not away with. They were not at all in his line. But he had heard of Christ as an extraordinary Being. He would like to know more about Him. He would wish, if he might, to get at the actual facts. He was inclined to be sceptical. What he would say would be something like this: "I know nothing of your Scriptures, and care nothing for your peculiar notions and ways; but I should be glad to hear a plain narrative of the life of Jesus. Tell me what

He did, and how He looked. Picture Him for me as I should have seen Him if I had been a centurion in Syria. Was He really strong, and full of energy and power? Those are the qualities that I understand and admire."

In every particular our second Gospel answers to, and satisfies, these demands. There is in it little of reference to the past. There are very few allusions to distinctively Jewish ways, and these are always explained. The "Law" is not so much as mentioned. There is no genealogy of Christ, and there is not even an account of His birth. He is introduced at once as "anointed with power," and as fully engaged in His work. There are no long discourses; but there are many mighty deeds.

The very style of the narrative, it has been well said, "seems to catch something of the energetic brevity, something of the haughty compression of the Roman." To borrow a description which has been given of one of our own most vigorous writers, "He is great in single figures and striking episodes, but wants gradation and continuity. He sees history as it were by flashes of lightning. A single scene, a single figure is minutely photographed. Every tree and stone, almost every blade of grass, the attitude or expression of a principal figure, the gestures of a momentary passion, everything leaps into vision under that sudden glare." (*Note* 5.)

From first to last St Mark is realistic and circumstantial. The action is rapid, and events appear to be happening before our eyes. To give but a few examples: it is from St Mark that we learn that the multitudes were made to sit down on "the green

grass" ; that the disciples were sent out "two and two" ; that the demoniac was "cutting himself with stones" ; that the paralytic was "borne of four" ; and that the man restored to sight was heard to exclaim, "I see men as trees ! I see them walking !" As we turn over his pages we find them filled with incidents and anecdotes.

But what after all was of more importance to the Roman, as it is of much greater consequence to us, is the light in which St Mark presented the central Figure of his narrative. Happily we are left in no uncertainty on the matter ; and for this none have more reason to be thankful than ourselves.

In some respects the mental traits and aptitudes of Englishmen resemble those of the Romans long ago. We are capable of being moved by ideals, but they must be such as can be readily translated into action. It is useless to ask us to be satisfied with sentiments that have no relation to facts. With outstanding exceptions, we are not endowed with special mystical gifts, and we are not at our best in the department of abstract thought. But we can work, and we do appreciate whatever carries the stamp of practical efficiency. We know the need, and we feel the power of religion. And it is true to say that, perhaps as never before, we are convinced that there is no light and strength such as that which comes from Jesus Christ. But our knowledge of Him must be shown to rest on a firm historical basis. With the Roman we say, "Let us see Him just as He was." That is the demand which confronts our preachers and teachers to-day.

To that demand there is no answer like the Gospel of St Mark. As a literary composition it may not be a consummate work of art. It is rather to be likened to a collection of notes, often rough and sometimes obscure. We can see that again and again St Matthew and St Luke have thought it advisable to smooth out the sentences, and soften away what they feared might be misunderstood, in the somewhat abrupt and outspoken descriptions that St Mark had given of the great Worker and His associates. (*Note* 6.) We are the more thankful that this original sketch of our Lord has been preserved for us. Let us take note of some of the descriptions we should have lost if it had not been so.

It is only in this Gospel that we are told that our Lord was actually Himself "the carpenter." It is here that we have details given to us of His acts and words which are not recorded elsewhere; as, for example, that He "took" one and another "by the hand," and the children "in His arms." St Mark, too, is careful to preserve the very sounds and tones that He uttered as these were heard in the original Aramaic—*Boanerges*, *Ephphatha*, *Talitha cumi*, *Corban*, and *Abba*. It is to be noticed that he always translates them.

In St Mark's accounts we can almost trace the lights and shadows as they passed over His face. Nine times, at least, we are told how He "looked"; as when His eyes searched for the woman in the crowd, and when He came down from the Mount of Transfiguration; when He was "grieved," and when He "sighed," when He "wondered," when He "loved," and when He "was angry."

But, of course, if we are to get a true sense of the value of St Mark's portrait, we must not only fix our thoughts upon the details. We must try to apprehend its character and significance as a whole. The best way to do this is to read the Gospel rapidly through, as if we were doing so for the first time.

In such a survey we should note how the young prophet from Nazareth is announced by His forerunner as "mightier than I"; how He Himself speaks of "the kingdom," and arouses enthusiasm; how He draws men after Him, and expels the evil spirit that interrupts His teaching; how strong He is to heal diseases, as also to resist the first outburst of popularity which threatened to divert Him from His appointed course; how He seems always to do the unexpected thing, and is regarded by His own family as mad. It is soon made plain that He is not the leader who is generally wanted. Influential people are not convinced by His miracles. They do not question their reality, but they ascribe them to the black art. Then again, He surprises everybody by not asserting His claims. He shuns observation, and will not have His wonders to be known. Before long there are plots against His life. The scene darkens. He appears to have difficulty in working His miracles. He devotes Himself more especially to the education of the inner circle. He does not tell them who He is. He waits until they tell Him. We are impatient at what seems their slowness, but we must remember that He always speaks of Himself in the third person. They never know what He will do or say next. He turns away a promising

young convert, and foretells persecutions. Then He leaves Galilee, where His work has ended in gloom, and goes to Jerusalem. There is a momentary gleam of brightness, and what looks like the beginning of a popular triumph. The people seem ready to accept Him as their leader. But He disappoints them again. The predictions of suffering become more frequent, and more precise. One disciple betrays Him, and the rest desert Him. Peter fails most conspicuously of all.

So the end comes, on the deliberately chosen path of self-sacrifice. The comments of the onlookers give the true secret of the story. On the one hand there is the mocking epigram hurled at Him as He hangs upon the Cross—" He saved others, Himself He cannot save " ; on the other, there is the verdict of the startled Roman officer—" Truly this man was Son of God." The account ends with a strange story of an empty tomb.

We are likely to close our examination with a two-fold impression. In the first place, we must feel that it is of no ordinary Being that we have been reading. To use the words of an honoured interpreter of this Gospel—" St Mark does not write with a dogmatic purpose. But the Person whose movements are depicted in his vivid narrative is seen to be at once man and more than man." " The centurion's words express the conviction with which the student of St Mark rises from his examination of this Gospel." (*Note* 7.)

And, on the other hand, it is simply incredible that such a picture as this could have been the work of inventive imagination. We feel that it must

have been a transcript from the life. Consequently we cannot overestimate its worth and its influence. If it can be said with truth that the First Gospel has been of more importance to the world than any other book that was ever written, we need not hesitate to assert that the Second of the Gospels is emphatically the Gospel for the present: that, in short, there is no book which is more likely to be of service to the Church and the world of to-day.

NOTES

1. After a full discussion of the evidence, both external and internal, for and against the authenticity of the verses xvi. 9-20, as they are given in our ordinary text, Dr Westcott and Dr Hort came to the following conclusions:

   "Its authorship and its precise date must remain unknown: it is, however, apparently older than the time when the Canonical Gospels were generally received."

   "It manifestly cannot claim any apostolic authority; but it is doubtless founded on some tradition of the apostolic age."

   "It constitutes a condensed fifth narrative of the Forty Days."—*The N.T. in the Original Greek*, Vol. i. Appendix, p. 51.

2. There was in antiquity a general agreement that St Mark's Gospel was written at Rome. A note to this effect in the old Syriac Version goes so far as to say, that the Evangelist "spoke and preached in Latin." It need scarcely be said

that no scholar would think of maintaining such an opinion now; but it is not without significance that there are a number of Latin terms in the Gospel—ten certainly, three of them peculiar to it; and that in one instance (xii. 42) the equivalent of the value of money is given in the Roman currency.

3. Perhaps the most noteworthy testimony is that of Papias (in Eusebius, *H.E.* iii. 39). He is reported as saying, "Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately everything that he remembered, without, however, recording in order what was either said or done by Christ. For neither did he hear the Lord, nor did he follow Him; but afterwards, as I said [attended] Peter, who adapted his instructions to the needs [of his hearers] but had no design of giving a connected account of the Lord's oracles. So then Mark made no mistake, while he thus wrote down some things as he remembered them; for he made it his one care not to omit anything that he heard, or to set down any false statement therein."

4. There is strong evidence in the statements of early writers, and in the unanimity and tenacity with which the tradition was maintained, to show that St Peter did visit Rome and suffer martyrdom there.

The only hint of such a visit in the New Testament is contained in the words of his First Epistle—"She that is in Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you"; to which is

immediately added, "and so doth Mark my son."

It is generally agreed that "Babylon" was an enigmatic designation for Rome, which, as Dr Hort suggested, "may have been chosen prudentially."

A not improbable suggestion is that St Peter went to Rome at the invitation of St Paul, who felt that their association together there would do more than anything else to cement the unity of the Jewish and Gentile elements in the Church. If that were so, Mark may have preceded him as his messenger and forerunner (see Col. iv. 10).

5. It was Archbishop Alexander who, in his *Leading Ideas of the Gospels*, p. 51, applied to St Mark this account, given by Mr Lowell, of the style of Thomas Carlyle.

6. A collection of such passages is to be found in Sir John Hawkins' *Horæ Synopticæ*, pp. 96-100. Among them may be noted as examples:

   i. 34. "He healed *many* that were sick," changed by St Matthew to "all," and by St Luke to "every one of them."

   ii. 27. "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath," modified or omitted by St Matthew and St Luke.

   iii. 21. "He is beside Himself."

   vi. 5. "He could there do no mighty work, save, etc.," changed by St Matthew into "He did not many mighty works there."

vii. 32-37. Use of spittle as means of healing and painful effort implied in "looking up to heaven He sighed."

viii. 17-18. "Have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not?" omitted in St Matthew's version.

7. Dr Swete, *St Mark*, p. lxxxviii.

IV

THE THIRD EVANGELIST

The Jew and the Roman stood for important sections of mankind, but they did not represent the whole even of the western world. There was yet another race of the old civilisation which in its way also had been getting ready for Christ. The Greeks differed profoundly from the Jews and the Romans. Without being their equals in moral intensity or will force, they possessed a wider culture and a larger development of intellectual faculty. They were quick-witted and beauty-worshipping. They had an unrivalled power of philosophic idealism, and a vivid sense of the manifoldness and harmony of life. (*Note* 1.) And, further, they were rich in capacity for enjoyment, and always ready to be interested in a new thing.

Plainly it was no ordinary message that could meet and satisfy the restless cravings of the fastidious Greek nature, and the messenger who was to convey it would have to be no ordinary man. We may say with all due respect that neither St Matthew nor St Mark would have been the instrument fitted for the task. It was essential that it should be a Greek who was to deliver the message to the Greeks. And,

obviously, it must be an educated Greek. He should have high intellectual qualities. Accuracy of expression and graces of style would be likely to tell. It would be good, too, if he were a man whose mind had been widened by travel, and by the experience which travel brings of men and things. Moreover, it was necessary that he should have been trained in a comprehensive school of Christian thought and feeling.

It is not easy to see how any of these qualifications could have been dispensed with in the writer of a Gospel which was to be intelligible to the mind, attractive to the heart, and a revelation to the soul of the Greek.

The Third Gospel does not tell the name of its author, but no one questions that tradition has been right in attributing it to St Luke, who was also the writer of the Acts. It is agreed that he was a Greek. In one passage of the New Testament (Col. iv. 11) he is expressly distinguished from "those of the circumcision." There is no doubt that St Luke was a well-educated man. A glance at his Gospel is enough to show this. The dignified preamble, the historical method, the wealth of vocabulary, the well turned periods, the classic correctness with which the rough expressions of the documents he uses are smoothed away, all indicate the accomplished man of letters.

We are accustomed in these days to hear it urged that no education is complete unless to careful literary culture there has been added some degree of accurate scientific training. The combination is admirable, but we can scarcely expect it to be other-

wise than rare. In the Third Evangelist we have an instance in which they are found together. He has always been identified with "Luke the beloved physician" referred to by St Paul. The internal evidence of his writings is strongly in favour of the identification. The case may have been overstated when it was claimed that, of "words specially used by medical writers," there are 252 in the Gospel (and 233 in the Acts); but the general contention is not to be gainsaid. (*Note* 2.)

It is noticeable that five out of the six miracles peculiar to this Evangelist are miracles of healing. He only, for instance, records the healing of Malchus' ear. Some of us may detect a tenderness for the credit of the profession, in the fact that St Luke omits St Mark's depreciatory comment upon the physicians consulted by the woman with the issue. It is not he who tells us that she "was nothing bettered but rather grew worse." On the other hand, it is St Luke alone who gives us the saying "Physician, heal thyself." We may note that he is the only Evangelist who tells of the Circumcision of Christ, and of the "bloody sweat" in the Garden. And we may be grateful that our chief testimony to the Virgin Birth should come from him. No doubt the science of those days would scarcely pass muster in our own, but none the less it must have afforded a careful mental discipline; and then as now "the profession of a physician" was one which "pre-eminently requires learning, knowledge, sagacity, and judgment. The habits of close observation, nice discrimination, accurate diagnosis, and careful statement are the

essential features" of his character. All these are conspicuous in the writings of St Luke.

There is a tradition, we could wish it were true, which makes St Luke a painter. We have a reference to it in a sonnet of Rossetti.

> "Give honour unto Luke Evangelist,
> For it was he, the ancient legends sang,
> Who first taught Art to fold her hands and pray."

The "ancient legends" do not appear to be older than the sixth century; and, in spite of the fact that some of us may have looked through the iron grating at the top of the Scala Santa upon what we were told was one of his pictures, we must abandon the belief in any literal sense. Still we can console ourselves with the thought that the instinct which prompted it was a true one. If St Luke was not actually a painter, he had the artist's soul. How comes it otherwise that his has always been the favourite Gospel of artists? We have only to think of the subjects of the old masters to see how many of them were borrowed from St Luke—the Annunciation, the visit to the aged Elisabeth, the presentation in the temple, the Boy among the doctors, to mention instances that come first to mind. (*Note* 3.)

St Luke's, then, is the artistic Gospel; we may call it the artistic book of the Bible. Renan would have had us go even further than that. Clever, lighthearted, imaginative as a Greek, he declared it to be "le plus beau livre qu'il y ait," the most beautiful book there is.

We have said enough, then, to show how well St Luke was fitted on the intellectual side for the work

to be undertaken by him. Such a blending of "sweetness and light" would go far to enable him to win a favourable hearing from his highly-critical countrymen.

But he might have had all these qualities, and yet not be able to write a Gospel. Literary capacity is not by itself enough to equip a man for the work of an Evangelist. And to be the evangelist to the Greek world was indeed no easy task. We are accustomed to hear it said that the Greek lacked depth of religious seriousness and, in particular, that he was weak in the sense of sin. On the other hand, he was responsive to ideals, and had large conceptions of the manifoldness of human life. Alexander was the true exponent of Greek progress when he declined the advice which bade him treat his fellow-countrymen as belonging to one class, and the rest of mankind to another. No narrow and restricted Gospel would answer to his best thoughts. It must be a Gospel for every class and every race, and must reveal a hope and possibility for all. In short, it must be a Gospel, not only of beauty, but of grace.

Where was the school in which the requisite training for such a presentation of the Christian message would be gained? One name at once rises to our lips. Obviously the man who could do most to train St Luke was St Paul. He was the one teacher then living, perhaps that ever lived, who could best show him the widest meaning of Christianity, and open his eyes to see its bearings upon the biggest problems of the world. If only he might live with St Paul, share his thoughts, and catch his spirit—that would furnish him as nothing else could

with the theological preparation for his task. And so it was. How the two were introduced we do not know. Probably they met in Antioch. (*Note* 4.) Perhaps it was a case of medical attendance, and it may be that this was one of the gains that have accrued to the Church from St Paul's weak health and often infirmities. The two men travelled together. Irenæus spoke of Luke as "inseparable from Paul." They were kindred souls. The help of a physical kind which the one could give was amply repaid by spiritual knowledge and blessing. St Luke seems to have been with St Paul for not less than ten years. (*Note* 5.) The more closely we examine the Gospel, the more we feel that its temper was just that of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. (*Note* 6.) Throughout it we breathe the atmosphere of the largest Catholicity.

St Luke's is the Gospel for humanity. It alone speaks of "a light to lighten the Gentiles," and it foretells that the message is to "be preached to all nations." It records our Lord's references to Naaman the Syrian, and the Gentile woman of Sarepta. In it only do we read the accounts of the good and the thankful Samaritans.

More especially is it the Gospel of the neglected and outcast, and of the poor to whom the good news is preached. Here only angels are to be heard talking with shepherds, and is the beggar to be seen in Abraham's bosom. It is here that we are introduced to the praying publican, the repentant Zacchæus, the prodigal son, and the penitent thief.

So, too, it is the Gospel of childhood and old age. Here it is that we are told of the infancy of the

Baptist, and of the Child among the doctors in the temple — "the solitary flower plucked from the silence of thirty years." (*Note* 7.) And it is here that we have become familiar with the aged Elisabeth, and Anna, and Symeon.

Then, also, St Luke's is pre-eminently the Gospel of Womanhood. It looks as if the materials for the opening chapters had been contributed by women, possibly by the Virgin Mother herself. It is this Gospel that tells of the band of women who ministered to the Lord, of the domestic life of Martha and Mary, of the care for the afflicted daughter of Abraham, of the widow of Zidon, and the widow of Nain ; of her who loved most, of the woman with the candle sweeping the house, of the importunate widow, and of the daughters of Jerusalem weeping on the way to the Cross. (*Note* 8.)

The Gospel is full of large thoughts. From first to last it is pervaded by the spirit of tolerance and hope. It contains not one harsh syllable even against the Jews. All its characters are painted in the most favourable light.

But, as before, it is not enough to observe the general setting or to recognise the atmosphere of the Gospel. Sometimes in the work of an inferior artist we see many things that attract and please us, and yet are conscious that it lacks a main subject and motive which should arrest attention and live in the memory. We need have no such fear as we study the portraiture of St Luke. Subordinate details are only introduced in order that they may lead to a concentration of interest upon Him whom our eyes

are intended to follow as the all-absorbing centre of interest.

When we ask what the particular aspect is in which Christ is presented by St Luke, we can have no difficulty in perceiving that He is depicted as the universal Son of Man who is in contact with the life of humanity at every point.

His descent is traced, not merely from Abraham, but from Adam. He is born, not in a palace, but in the out-house of an inn. His mother can only make the offering of the poorest. He is baptised as one of a crowd. He is united to men in their social life. He does not shut Him from His kind. Again and again we are told that He accepts the hospitality offered to Him. He sits at meat in the homes of the people. He weeps as a patriot for the sorrows of His country.

From first to last, He is shown to us as One who, in the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews, was "made like unto His brethren," "touched with the feeling of their infirmities," "who can bear gently with the ignorant and erring."

By what title, then, are we to describe this aspect of our Lord's life and ministry? Until our attention has been directed to it, we have probably little idea of the extent to which the Priestly side of our Lord's character is emphasised in the Third Gospel; and how liturgical is the colouring that everywhere pervades it.

St Luke begins his narrative with the words, "There was a certain priest." He introduces us at once to the temple, and the altar of incense. He alone informs us that our Lord was related to the

priestly order, and that He began His ministry at thirty, the priestly age. He gives us the Presentation in the temple, and the visit to the temple at the age of twelve. And it is to be observed that, whereas in St Matthew the Temptation culminates with the offer of the kingdoms of the world, the final scene in St Luke is that on the pinnacle of the temple.

St Luke's is pre-eminently the Gospel of Praise. It is from it that we derive the Canticles. Not less than seven times do we meet in it with the expression "glorifying God."

So, too, St Luke's is the Gospel of Prayer. Seven times we are shown our Lord engaged in prayer, where the fact is unrecorded elsewhere, *e.g.*, before His Baptism, before the choice of the Twelve, before St Peter's confession, and before the Transfiguration. "He was praying in a certain place," when the disciples said to Him, "Teach us to pray." In this Gospel only we have the words, "Simon, I have prayed for thee." Here only is recorded His prayer for His murderers on the Cross. And here only do we find the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican praying in the temple.

Once more, this is the Gospel of Absolution. Here are the stories of the justified publican, of Zacchæus, of the woman in Simon's house, and of the penitent robber.

We seem everywhere to be moving among the frescoes of the Cloister, and in the aisles of the Sanctuary. We catch the tones of supplication, and we listen to the strains of thanksgiving. The last glimpse of the ascending Lord shows Him with His

hands lifted in benediction ; and the book concludes with the words " they were continually in the temple blessing God."

When we read our First Gospel we say at once this is unmistakably the Gospel of *authority*, the Gospel of the King. It is equally plain that the Second Gospel is the Gospel of *energy*, the Gospel of the Prophet, mighty in deed and word. Is it not as certain that in the Third Gospel we have the Gospel of *sympathy*, the Gospel of the Priest ?

Alas ! If we have allowed men to think that the terms " ecclesiastic " and " ecclesiastical " stand for that which is narrow and hard, if we have made the word " priest " to represent anything less than the widest and kindliest concern for the interests and needs of life. If it be true that we have done this, we have done it " to all men's loss." Can it be that one, and not the least, of the services which St Luke, the Gentile layman and doctor, has to render us is to restore to us the larger, more vital and human, conception of the mission and work of the priesthood ?

Enough, we may hope, has been said to make it plain how wonderfully St Luke was fitted to address those for whom he originally wrote ; and to encourage the belief that the influence of his Gospel is very far from being exhausted. We are all feeling that the largest social, and in the best sense democratic, interpretation of Christianity has yet to come.

Shall we not believe that as St Matthew's has been the Gospel of the Past, and as St Mark's is the Gospel of the Present, so St Luke's will be the Gospel of the Future ? (*Note* 9.)

NOTES

1. "The essence of the beautiful," Aristotle declared, "consists in amplitude and order."—*Poet.* vii.

2. In 1882 a book on *The Medical Language of St Luke* was published in this country by Dr W. H. Hobart. While a good many of its arguments have been adversely criticised, and seem to need modification, the main contention has been widely accepted. Zahn, for example, incorporated not a little of the work in his *Introduction to the New Testament*, and Harnack has more recently endorsed its view.

3. The Third Gospel has been the musician's Gospel. Where else did we find our *Magnificat*, and *Benedictus*, *Nunc Dimittis*, and *Gloria in Excelsis?* Keble was thinking of these when he said of St Luke:

> "Taught by thee the Church prolongs
> Her hymns of high thanksgiving still."

4. According to a statement of Eusebius (*H.E.* iii. 4), St Luke was born at Antioch. The statement is rendered probable by several minor coincidences, *e.g.*, the special knowledge of Antioch shown in the Acts. They are small points, but we may note that in Acts vi. 5 "Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch" is the one deacon to be localised; and that (xi. 26) "the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Antioch

was the first great centre of Christianity that was established outside Palestine. An important reading of Codex Bezæ, in Acts xi. 28, implies that Luke had joined St Paul at Antioch before the first missionary journey.

5. "During the two years of St Paul's confinement at Cæsarea he (St Luke) would have frequent opportunities of converse with James and the Elders and others who had known Jesus Christ in the days of His flesh. While there too, he might have visited Gethsemane and wandered over the Mount of Olives and walked out to Bethany, and from the descent of the mountain have looked down upon Jerusalem, as Jesus did; and he may have stood on Calvary, and have seen Joseph's new tomb in which the body of Jesus had lain."—Lord Arthur Hervey, *Authenticity of St Luke*, p. 139.

6. It has been calculated that there are 101 words to be found only in St Luke (Gospel and Acts) and in St Paul. Among specially Pauline words we notice in St Luke, *Grace* (eight times), *preach the Gospel* (ten), *justified* and *Saviour*. There is a marked agreement also between him and St Paul in their accounts of the institution of the Eucharist.

7. It is St Luke who gives the allusion to the children at their games (vii. 31), and to the wisdom of babes (x. 21).

"Apart from the Gospels, I cannot find that early Christian literature exhibits the slightest

sympathy towards the young."—Prof. Burkitt, *Gospel History and its Transmission*, p. 285.

8. "The female sex in which antiquity saw nothing but inferiority, which Plato considered intended to do the same things as the male, only not so well, was understood for the first time by Christ. His treatment brought out its characteristics, its superiorities, its peculiar power of gratitude and self-devotion."—*Ecce Homo*, p. 233.

Professor Blass (*Philology of the Gospels*, pp. 155 f.) has given reasons for thinking that the account of the woman taken in adultery, which stands in our revised text in the eighth chapter of St John, originally formed a part of St Luke's Gospel (following after xxi. 36). In that case we should be able to add this beautiful story to the narratives of womanhood which are characteristic of the Third Evangelist.

9. Something perhaps ought to be said of omissions that are to be noted in certain MSS. of St Luke's text; *e.g.*, the words in ix. 55 f., "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them"; and in xxii. 43, 44, "And there appeared unto Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground." Still more serious is the omission (in B. and D.) of the prayer of the Passion, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (xxiii. 34).

We cannot think of any words that are more in harmony with St Luke's spirit and purpose than these; and we may well be disposed to believe that Bishop Lightfoot was right when he wrote," It seems impossible to believe that these incidents are other than authentic, and the solution will suggest itself that the Evangelist himself may have issued two separate editions. This conjecture will be confirmed by observing that in the second treatise of St Luke (the Acts) similar traces of two editions are seen, *e.g.*, Acts xxviii. 16, 29."—*Fresh Revision of English New Testament*, p. 32. This hypothesis of two editions issued by St Luke has also been maintained by Blass and Salmon. Other reasons have been more recently alleged for supposing that the original draft of the Gospel may have undergone even more drastic changes. In an article in the *Hibbert Journal* (Oct. 1920) Canon Streeter suggests that St Luke had compiled in Cæsarea, about 60 A.D., such materials as he had been able to collect up to that date, and had revised and reissued the work when subsequently he had met with St Mark's Gospel in Rome. Incidentally it may be observed that such a proceeding on St Luke's part would have implied a strong sense of the trustworthiness of the Marcan narrative; and this testimony, from one who had made it his business to discriminate between many sources of information, would be of very great worth.

A further point of interest is raised by the insertion, to which we have already referred, in

Codex Bezæ, of the words, "when *we* were gathered together," in Acts xi. 28. This would imply that St Luke was at Antioch at that time. Now we know that St Mark was there also (xii. 25, xiii. 5); so that the two Evangelists may have become personally known to each other at an early date.

V

THE FOURTH EVANGELIST

The most careless reader must be struck by the contrast between the Fourth Gospel and the other three. It does not begin like a life of Christ. It has a remarkable introduction which speaks of One whom the author calls "The Word," and seems at first sight more likely to lead to a philosophical treatise than to anything that we are accustomed to look for in a record of historical facts. The impression strengthens as we proceed. Great abstract conceptions are placed before us, such as Life, and Light, and Glory, and Grace, and Truth; and we begin to ask ourselves whether or not we are to be occupied with a theological and metaphysical inquiry. Most of the people who appear upon the scenes are familiar to us, but the language they speak is strange. The Baptist, for example, instead of urging the people to repentance is credited with a deeply mysterious utterance as to the efficacy of the Atonement—"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Simon and Andrew are met at the outset as in St Mark; but, instead of being called by Jesus, they come to Him of their own accord, and immediately recognise Him as the Messiah.

Again, the stage on which the events take place is unfamiliar. We are throughout at Jerusalem, with but occasional visits to Galilee. Some of the occurrences strike us as the same, but even so there are differences. The cleansing of the temple, for instance, is given at the beginning and not at the end of the ministry; and a new date is assigned to our Lord's crucifixion. And important things happen, such as the raising of Lazarus, of which no hint was to be found in the Synoptists.

Most perplexing of all, Christ Himself appears in quite a new light. From the first He owns to His Messiahship, and tells of His expected death. Without much introduction, He unfolds His relationship to the unseen Father, and makes the most stupendous claims: "Before Abraham was, I am"; "I and the Father are one"; "No man cometh to the Father but through Me"; "I am the Light of the world." All through the book we are listening to transcendental theological discourses; and what is so puzzling is that the style of the language attributed to our Lord is often not to be distinguished from that of the Evangelist himself.

This is a serious list of difficulties, and there are others that might be added. It is best to face them frankly and patiently, with a sincere determination to get as much light as can be had in regard to them.

We had better begin with the relation between the Fourth Gospel and the other three, to which we have referred. When we have read and studied the earlier Gospels, we are inclined to wonder why any-

thing more should be needed. They appear to give us just the variety and completeness of view that is wanted. We are not very ready to believe that it can be necessary, or desirable, that there should be another account which, to say the least, is not easily to be fitted into the framework that we have learned to understand and appreciate. Some are content to leave the matter there; but, if we are willing to hold our judgment in suspense, we may discover that there are things to be considered which will dispose us to change our mind.

After all, there are points in regard to which the Synoptists leave us questioning. Why, for example, are they silent about the visits that our Lord, as a pious Jew, must have felt Himself bound to pay periodically to the Temple? And how is this silence as to His visits to the metropolis to be reconciled with that most pathetic of laments of which they do not fail to tell—"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" If there were visits corresponding with the great feasts, it is scarcely likely that He would have employed exactly the same language in His appeals to cultivated theologians that would have been suited to the peasants of Galilee. And would not the question of the Messiahship have been inevitably forced upon Him? Ought we to be surprised that the question, "Who art thou?" was immediately raised at Jerusalem?

Again, must we not allow that there are expressions used by the Synoptists which suggest inquiries

to which they do not fully furnish the answer? Can it be denied that there are indications in their narratives of the same stupendous claims that are made for our Lord in the Gospel of St John? What of words like these—"Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord"; "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of the Father"; "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him"? And what of St Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"? Then there is that passage, in some ways the most mysterious of all, which taught St Augustine the difference between the teaching of Christ and that of the best of the philosophers, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (*Note* 1.) Can we read these statements, and others like them, without feeling that the earlier Evangelists knew that there were more things, and more transcendent things, in regard to the Person of Christ, which it was not their immediate purpose to declare?

The fact is that, as we think carefully about the matter, our difficulty begins to take a new shape and we find ourselves asking, not why it is that St John says what he does about our Lord, but why it is that the earlier Evangelists were as silent as they were. And this question becomes the more insistent when we recall what we know of the very earliest stage of thought in the Christian Church.

If the books of the New Testament were arranged in their chronological order, we should find that

the first presentation of our Lord would show Him as a transcendent Heavenly Being, the exalted source of all spiritual blessing and power, raised far above the limitations of humanity that belong to earthly existence as we know it. And, when we read of the faith and obedience of the first disciples as recorded in the Acts, we are left in no doubt that it was to such a Lord and Master that they lifted their hearts and consecrated their lives. If that was so at the beginning, how are we to explain the fact that the first three Gospels said so little to suggest this higher conception of the Person of our Lord, and were almost entirely occupied with what we might describe as the more humanitarian aspects of His earthly career ?

The truth seems to be that a change of emphasis had become necessary. Continuous concentration upon a single aspect of any fact has its dangers, and these in due time begin to appear and need to be corrected. The teaching which fixed attention upon Christ after the spirit, such as was given more especially by St Paul, might, unless properly balanced, make men forget that He whom they wished to exalt had been, and still was, verily and vitally man. (*Note* 2.) We cannot therefore be surprised when we find that the first exaggeration of belief in the Church took the form of Docetism, the doctrine which denied that Christ had truly come in the flesh, and reduced His incarnate life to a mere semblance of humanity.

" The Gospels as we have them," Professor Burkitt has said, referring to the first three Gospels, " would never have become the official charters of

the Church but for the necessity of insisting upon the true human nature of our Lord." (*Note* 3.)

But, if this would explain the comparative silence of the Synoptists, it would also prevent their being accepted as an entirely sufficient and final account of the sojourning of Christ among men.

After a while a demand would inevitably arise that there should be another narrative, if this could be procured, which would re-emphasise the Divine element, and thus assist Christians to retain what was essential in the earlier Christology. (*Note* 4.)

And how could such a testimony be obtained? Suppose there was still living, in extreme old age, an eye-witness and favourite disciple; and suppose he had gathered around him a school of disciples to whom he had been in the habit of speaking of the things he had known, supplementing thereby the other accounts that were received in the Church, and insisting that the fuller teaching must be most earnestly maintained as alone sufficient to meet the perils of partial belief, and to supply an antidote to the wild and mischievous speculations that were attracting the minds of the unwary; might he not be urged by his devoted friends and loyal adherents to put down in permanent form what he had thus been accustomed to tell, that so his witness might remain for the enlightenment of the generations that were to follow? (*Note* 5.)

Is not this exactly what the old accounts describe as having happened? What, for instance, could correspond more completely with the situation as we have imagined it than the description given in

the so-called Muratorian fragment, which dates from the second century ?

" The Fourth Gospel," says this early authority, " is [the work] of John, one of the [personal] disciples (of Christ). Being exhorted by his fellow-disciples and bishops, he said, ' Fast with me to-day for three days, and let us relate to one another what shall have been revealed to each.' The same night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the Apostles, that John should write down everything in his own name, and all should certify.

" And therefore, although various elements are taught in the several books of the Gospels, yet it makes no difference to the faith of the believer, since all things in all of them are declared by one Supreme Spirit, concerning the Nativity, the Passion, the Resurrection, His intercourse with His disciples, and His two Advents, the first in despised lowliness, which is already past, the second with the magnificence of kingly power, which is yet to come. What wonder then, if John so boldly puts forward each statement in his Epistle also saying of himself, ' What we have seen with our eyes and heard with our ears, and our hands have handled, these things we have written unto you.' For so he avows himself not only an eye-witness and a hearer, but also a recorder of all the wonderful things of the Lord in order." (*Note* 6.)

Does not this account, which is confirmed by other early references (*Note* 7), carry on the face of it the stamp of veracity ? And are we not helped by it to read the significance of the somewhat cryptic endorsement in the last verse but one of the Gospel—

"This is the disciple which wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true"?

But, having got so far in our endeavour to grasp the possibilities of the situation, we have still to ask and answer a most important question. Is the Fourth Gospel, as we know it, really such a document as we might expect to be produced under the historical conditions and to meet the theological necessities which, as we have seen reason to believe, existed to call it forth? Let us notice the chief points to be considered.

The intention of the writer is proclaimed by himself. Of this we are left in no doubt. His desire, he tells us, is to bear his witness to the fact that from the very beginning of our Lord's ministry there were manifest signs, for all who could perceive them, of a more than earthly glory revealed under the conditions of opposition, humiliation, and suffering. With continual insistence he points to the evidence that the Lord had in very truth come in the flesh (*Note* 8); but he is certain that the whole truth has not been told until it is made clear that He had been, and always would be, that which it needed more than any merely human terms to describe. "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Son of God."

Then again, there can be no question that the Gospel bears the marks of having been the work of a very old man. It is full of most minute recollections of the far back time when the mind was "wax to receive and marble to retain." Details that stand out before the mental vision are recorded even

when it is not obvious what particular purpose they can serve. How vivid they are—the tenth hour, the waterpot left at the well, the stretch of the cornlands around Sychar, the relative positions of the fishing villages on the Sea of Galilee, the tessellated pavement on which Pilate gave judgment, the number of the soldiers responsible for the crucifixion as shown by the four parts into which the garments were divided, the fact that the inscription on the Cross was written in three languages, and the sight of the wound that was left by the lance.

And does not the difficulty, and indeed impossibility, of distinguishing between the utterances of our Lord and the thoughts of the Evangelist lead us to look in the same direction for its most probable explanation? What could be more natural in the case of a very old man? The world of his youth has passed away. He can no longer recall the exact chronological sequences. Events crowd on his memory, and he selects typical scenes. He can remember the characters of the principal actors. He has gone over the history so often that he cannot recollect the time when he thought differently about it. So he gives, not always the first impressions the Master made upon him, but the conclusions he had formed when he had come to know Him well. There is little trace of development. As we learn to understand a person, we see so much more in him than we did at first that we cannot retrace the steps by which our knowledge was gained. Moreover, we cannot, if we have derived much from him, entirely separate our thoughts from his. When we recall his teach-

ings, we clothe them in our own words. And yet the words are not entirely our own.

Is there anything in all this that is not in accord with actual, and not altogether uncommon, experience? And are we to say that, because what was thus reproduced bears the evident traces of the mind through which it had passed, we must be suspicious as to its fidelity and trustworthiness? We may allow that, except in the case of specially striking and memorable utterances, we cannot be certain that we are listening to the *ipsissima verba* of the Master Himself; but we may believe none the less, that in the witness of the faithful and loving disciple, we have that which takes us nearer to the truth, and is therefore of more real value, than any accuracy of the letter that was merely photographic.

Then, also, it should not be forgotten that there are numerous indications in the Fourth Gospel of which the evidential value is great, and not the less because sometimes they are so small as to make it inconceivable that they could have been introduced into a fabricated composition of later date. It is surely significant, for example, that the great forerunner should, in this Gospel only, never be described as "the Baptist." For the son of Zebedee, at all events, there would be no thought of the possibility of any confusion, since for him there was but one famous John. (*Note* 9.)

And may it not be that certain omissions from the earlier narratives are to be best explained in a very simple way? Is it not possible that there were things that could be told at a later date which it might have seemed wiser to pass over in silence when the

other Evangelists wrote? Might that have been the reason why the Fourth Gospel alone tells the name of the Apostle by whom the ear of the High Priest's servant was struck off; and might it not also account for the silence that had previously been maintained in regard to the raising of Lazarus?

Then, again, do not the very differences in the arrangement of the incidents suggest the genuineness of the record? Would not a mere romancer have been more likely to fit his new matter into the accepted framework of St Mark, and have shrunk from introducing startling discrepancies? (*Note* 10.)

Attempts have been made to throw doubt upon the possibility of the Johannine authorship by arguments which aimed to prove that the Fourth Gospel was the work of a Greek idealist thinker who was out of sympathy with Judaism and its peculiar conceptions. Amongst these a prominent place would be assigned eschatological representations connected with the Second Coming of the Lord. While it is true that these are not made much of in the Johannine writings, and may have been kept in the background in order to make more room for the teaching about the present work of the Spirit, it is not true that these conceptions are altogether absent from the Gospel (note, for instance, chaps. vi. and xxi.), still less from the First Epistle, which is allowed to have come from the same author.

So, again, the use of the term "Logos" in the Prologue to the Gospel has been alleged as indicating Greek philosophical influence, but a simpler explanation is likely to be the truer one. Is it not most

natural to suppose that the phrase "In the beginning" was intended as a reference to the opening words of Gen. i. 1; and that the use of the expression "the Word" was suggested by the oft repeated statement in that chapter of "And God said"? (*Note* 11.) It should be remembered that the Hebrew mind had been impressed by the thought of the creative word, as we learn from such passages as, "He spake the word, and they were made."

What is quite certain is that the Gospel was the composition of a man who did all his thinking in Hebrew, while the form in which his thought was clothed was the simplest possible Greek.

One who was himself a master of style has very strikingly described the distance by which the language of the Fourth Evangelist was removed from anything that could be suggestive of Hellenism.

"By Hellenism we understand a mode of thought that works through analysis, through illustration, through induction, through the unravelling of sequences. It aims at laying the process of thought open: it exhibits the order by which it passed from premises to conclusions. It is, above all things, rational, explanatory, continuous. It follows a matter through its stages; it gives the syllogistic evolution. It dissects, connects, co-ordinates, correlates. It is the triumphant exhibition of the discursive reason.

"But our author never argues, never co-ordinates, never dissects and unravels. Neither his style nor his thought suggests continuity. He omits all connections; and discloses no inward logical movement. His mode of presentation is not excursive

and explanatory, but intuitional, abrupt, assertive, cataclysmic. Single, living, vivid phrases leap out like stars. They stand there, as fixed points. Emphasis is given to them, not by elucidation, but by reiteration. It is the child's method of making a thing emphatic; positive argument there is none." (*Note* 12.)

The plain fact is that the difficulties which attend the traditional view of the Johannine authorship are less serious than those which beset the acceptance of any of the alternatives that have been proposed as substitutes for it. (*Note* 13.)

"Those who are familiar with the Christian literature of the second century will know how inconceivable it is that any Christian teacher could have imagined and presented as the author of the Fourth Gospel has done the generation in which the Lord moved. The hopes, the passions, the rivalries, the opinions, by which His contemporaries were swayed had passed away, or become embodied in new shapes." (*Note* 14.)

On the other hand, it can be said with truth that "the external testimony in favour of St John's Gospel reaches back much nearer to the writer's own time, and is far more extensive than can be produced in the case of most classical writings of the same antiquity."

And, further, as Bishop Lightfoot, whose words these are, did not hesitate to maintain, "the traditions of St John are more direct, more consistent, and more trustworthy than those which relate to the other Apostles." (*Note* 15.) Small wonder, then, that he should have given it as his

deliberate opinion that "whatever consequences may follow from it, we are compelled on critical grounds to accept the Fourth Gospel as the genuine work of John the son of Zebedee." (*Note* 16.)

To those who may have any lingering doubts as to the practical feasibility of combining the portraits of the first three Gospels with that of the fourth, we may commend this most illuminating statement by Dr Hort:

"It is only when we open St John's that the larger function of all the Gospels is disclosed. Assuming a knowledge of such facts and words as the others had already recorded, it brings to light the hidden base which makes them intelligible as objects and as vehicles of knowledge. Each of the three was by itself a sufficient and satisfying narrative of historical occurrences, selected out of existing material, expanded by new material, arranged, worded, under the guidance of a single large but limited purpose. When, however, the three met together in combined use, it became necessary to show that they were indeed but three different pictures of a common object. Yet a mere recombination of their elements, with or without additions, into a single new whole would have been a loss rather than a gain. The result would have been an individual portraiture, less instructive than any of the preceding delineations by very reason of its comparative completeness, leaving uncombined and unexplained the distinct forms of office in which they had severally depicted our Lord, harmonising details at the cost of a false and deceptive simplicity. Each separate exhibition

of historic truth had been suggestive of an underlying universal truth which was intended to be known. Their proper harmony could never have been displayed in a purely historical record, a biography of Jesus the Nazarene. It could only be reached by a fuller exposition of His historical manifestation as related to theological truth in the strictest sense; and such a complementary exposition, instead of superseding them, would raise them to a higher and a permanent function in the service of truth." (*Note* 17.)

In conclusion, we may make one further quotation from Bishop Lightfoot. The last public utterance put forth by the Bishop was an article that he had written on the Gospel of St John, and this was its final sentence: "I believe from my heart that the truth which this Gospel more especially enshrines—the truth that Jesus Christ is the very Word incarnate, the manifestation of the Father to mankind—is the one lesson which, duly apprehended, will do more than all our feeble efforts to purify and elevate human life here—by imparting to it hope and light and strength—the one study which alone can fitly prepare us for a joyful immortality hereafter." (*Note* 18.)

NOTES

1. Mrs Humphry Ward, in her *Recollections*, says that Walter Pater once said to her, "Take that saying, 'Come unto Me all ye that are weary and heavy laden.' How can you explain that? There is a mystery in it—something supernatural."

2. "No Church which cherished the finest and highest teaching of St Paul could possibly be satisfied with Gospels of the Synoptic type for the full record of the sayings and doings of Jesus."—B. W. Bacon, *Jesus and Paul*, pp. 236, 243.

3. *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, p. 46.

4. "As the years went on, the questions must begin to stir which ask—'Was there then no sign, no hint, nothing to suggest all this mystery that was behind at work?'"—Dr H. Scott Holland, *The Philosophy of Faith and the Fourth Gospel*, p. 126.

5. "While St Peter and St Paul converted disciples and organised congregations, St John alone was the founder of a school."—Bishop Lightfoot, *Essays on Supernatural Religion*, p. 216.

"At Ephesus in Asia the embers of the Apostolic age glowed longer than elsewhere; and we cannot wonder that here the torch should be lit which was to be handed on to later times."—Dr Sanday, *Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 254.

6. This famous document was recovered in the eighteenth century by Muratori in the library at Milan. The date of the original can be fixed at about 170 A.D.

7. Clement of Alexandria states on the authority of "the elders of an earlier generation" that "St John, last [of the Evangelists] when he saw that the outward [bodily] facts had been set

forth in the [existing] Gospels, impelled by his friends, divinely moved by the Spirit, made a spiritual Gospel."—Euseb. *H.E.* vi. 14.

8. " Nothing can be further from the truth than to assert, as is sometimes done, that the Christ of St John lacks the warm humanity displayed in the other Gospels. To mention but a single point, in no other Gospel is there so rich a display of human affection on His part."—Dr A. J. Mason, *Cambridge Theological Essays*, p. 458.

" In no early Christian document is the real humanity of Jesus so emphasised as in the Fourth Gospel."—Burkitt, *Gospel History and its Transmission*, p. 233.

9. " St John is nowhere mentioned by name in the Gospel; and while it appears incredible that an Apostle who stands in the Synoptists, in the Acts, and in St Paul, as a central figure among the twelve, should find no place in the narrative, the nameless disciple fulfils the part which would naturally be assigned to St John."—Dr Westcott, *St John*, p. xxii.

"The oblique allusion [to the beloved disciple] corresponds with the devout contemplation from a distance of events seen only after a long interval in their full significance."—*Ibid.*, p. xxiv.

10. It has been urged as a difficulty in the way of the acceptance of the Apostolic authorship of the Fourth Gospel that the son of Zebedee would not have been likely to have been " known unto

the high priest" (xviii. 15). Accordingly, the view has been maintained that the disciple so described was a young resident of Jerusalem of better social position than a fisherman of Galilee. But this means, if we are to identify him with the beloved disciple, that we must suppose him to have been admitted to a most honourable and intimate position at the Last Supper, in spite of the definite statement that "He sat down with the twelve" (St Matthew xxvi. 20). In other words we are to exchange one difficulty for another which is more serious.

Dr Sanday was probably nearer the truth when he wrote, "The acquaintance of the Evangelist [with the high priest] is not to be taken too strictly, but rather acquaintance with some member of his household is intended. The account of what happened to Peter might seem to be from the point of view of what we should describe as the servants' hall."—*The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 101.

11. Speaking of the use of the term *Logos* by "the writer whom we, as I believe rightly, call St John," Dr Sanday said, "He saw that it expressed more significantly than any other word that aspect of Christ's Incarnation that he most desired to express; and he welcomed the fact that it was a rich and suggestive word with which the philosophy of the time was familiar." —*Life of Christ in Recent Research*, p. 139.

12. Dr Scott Holland, *The Philosophy of Faith and the Fourth Gospel*, p. 159.

13. "Of course nothing can be simpler than to say that the author of the Gospel is unknown; but the moment we come to close quarters with the statement, and realise what it means, we perceive its difficulty."—Dr Sanday, *Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 256.

Dr Stanton supposes the author of the Fourth Gospel to have been a younger man, who had gone to Asia, perhaps earlier than the Apostle, and had there become intimately associated with him.

He "could remember having sometimes himself seen and heard Jesus, and felt himself possessed of a knowledge which was at least almost immediate, of the divine revelation made in the Lord, by intimate association with His personal disciples very soon after His departure."—*The Gospels as Historical Documents*, iii. p. 281. The difficulties involved in such a theory are very great, and the advantages to be derived from it are by no means clear.

A thoughtful student of the Gospel has suggested that the younger man in question might have been Lazarus (see W. K. Fleming's Article, *Guardian*, Dec. 19, 1906). In this case we should have good authority for regarding him as one who was loved by our Lord. Moreover, he would have been familiar with the life in Jerusalem, and would have had a home in its neighbourhood. What might not be easy to account for is the first-hand knowledge that is exhibited of all that was happening while Lazarus himself was in the tomb. And we

should have to explain his presence at the Last Supper.

What would be a grave obstacle in the way of the acceptance of the Apostolic authorship, if it could be taken seriously, is a statement that Papias had declared that John with his brother James had been "killed by the Jews." A report to this effect is found in the work of a fifth-century writer whose character for accuracy is not beyond question, and it was repeated, whether independently or not we cannot be sure, by a ninth-century chronicler. A certain amount of confirmation is claimed for this view on the ground that in some very early Church Calendars the names of the two brothers were commemorated on one day. But this would not of necessity imply that they had died in the same manner or at the same time, and certainly the New Testament evidence seems to negative such an idea.

What can be urged in its favour may be found in Dr Latimer Jackson's *Problem of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 140-150. That the report arose from a mistaken reading of Papias has been strongly maintained by Bishop Lightfoot and Prof. Zahn. The matter is fully discussed by Dr J. H. Bernard, *Studia Sacra*, pp 261-284, and by Dr J. Armitage Robinson, *The Historical Character of St John's Gospel*, pp. 64-80. The last named sums up as follows: "Our conclusion, then, is this. There is no sufficient evidence to cast a serious doubt on the universal tradition of the Church that St John the Apostle

died peacefully at Ephesus in extreme old age. The attribution to Papias of the statement that John and his brother James were killed by the Jews rests on very slender authority. It is almost inconceivable that, if Papias really said this, Irenæus, Eusebius and others who had read Papias should not have referred to it. And it is not difficult to explain the attribution of such a statement to Papias as a mistake due to a careless interpretation."

The fact is not to be overlooked that there was an early tradition that two Johns resided at Ephesus, one of whom was the Apostle and the other known as "the presbyter." Eusebius, who accepted the report (*H.E.* iii. 39), suggested that the latter might have been the author of the Apocalypse; and not a few modern scholars have maintained that he was the writer of the Gospel. But it is not easy to see what help such an hypothesis can afford, and evidently there is a case to be made out for believing that the Apostle and the presbyter were the same person. See Dr Nairne, *Johannine Writings*, p. 101.

14. Bishop Westcott, *St John*, p. xxiv.

15. *The Fourth Gospel, its Authorship*, p. 137. *Essays on Supernatural Religion*, p. 216.

16. These words occurred in a lecture originally delivered by Bishop Lightfoot in 1871, which was prepared for publication by him shortly before his death. It appeared in the *Expositor*

in 1890, and was subsequently reprinted in *Biblical Essays*, p. 171. When carefully reconsidering his work, the Bishop wrote that in eighteen years he had "found nothing to withdraw."

17. *The Way, the Truth, the Life*, p. 48 f.

18. *Biblical Essays*, p. 171.

VI

THE WONDERFUL LIFE

We have thought of the provision that has been made in the Gospels for our knowledge of Christ as He appeared during His stay upon earth. It has seemed worth while to dwell somewhat carefully upon the nature of this provision, in order that we may be helped to realise afresh how marvellously complete it is. We can now get on with our more particular work. We are to ask what the knowledge that is to be so gained really amounts to; what the total effect is like when we have combined into a single impression all that may be gathered from the different accounts.

Let us approach the matter as simply and frankly as we can. Suppose we were studying the records for the first time, without any sort of prepossession, quite naturally and freely, what would strike us most to start with?

We need not hesitate for an answer to that question. We should feel that here is something—Some One—unlike anything that we had known before. It is not only that there is an atmosphere of mystery about the story, but that almost everything that happens is extraordinary. There can be no

doubt that the Gospels are " obstinately miraculous." (*Note* 1.) To take only a few examples: there is the wonder of His birth, and His marvellous powers; the miracles of healing, and the seeming suspensions of natural laws; the passage through death, and the portent of the empty grave. It is all astonishing and abnormal. No familiarity and no conventionality can blind us to the fact that the Gospel story is not as other narratives are. It is a challenge to thought, and inevitably awakens criticism. We cannot wonder that it has presented a great many problems to a great number of minds. To some indeed the difficulties have seemed so formidable that they have become entirely sceptical as to the possibility of finding any but one explanation of them.

We know the kind of conclusion which such persons have generally been disposed to adopt. They have argued that we ought to remember that the Gospels were the product of an uncritical age; that rumours may become vastly exaggerated in a very short time, and the more easily when persons and events are seen through an atmosphere which has been created by absolute devotion and unquestioning credulity. In short, they have urged that the narratives cannot be relied upon as literal history, though they are quite ready to allow that they may contain a nucleus of historical fact.

We have long been accustomed to hear this kind of explanation—sometimes only vaguely insinuated, sometimes quite confidently expressed. We may make bold to assert that, if such statements are put forward in future, it will be with much less confidence than they have been put forward in the past.

It was easier to think and say these things before scholarship had come to what is practically a general agreement as to the dates of the documents. So long as it was possible to speak of the Gospels as late second-century writings, it might be thought that there was an interval sufficiently long to admit of all sorts of imaginary and legendary embellishments. But the case is different when we have to shorten the interval by something like a hundred years. Then, too, the most exacting investigation into the accounts of the environment, and the details of the narratives, has had the effect of greatly strengthening confidence in the accuracy and sincerity of the writers.

But what perhaps has been most unfavourable to the sceptical theory has been the failure to reduce the representation of the central Figure, after all the supposed accretions have been stripped away, to anything that is actual enough and probable enough to appeal to a healthy intelligence and secure any general acceptance.

Then, again, it has been made perfectly plain that what remained, when the editing process was completed, could never have been sufficiently remarkable and impressive to account for the phenomenal growth and rapid expansion of the earliest Christianity.

We may, perhaps, say that it has not been without advantage that these attempts at explanation should have been made. They will not have been useless if they have served to show that the solution of the difficulty must be sought in a very different direction.

How, then, are we to set about our study of these marvellous elements in the story? There are two considerations which we shall do well to keep in mind. The first, and most important thing, is that we should *treat the facts*, not separately but together, *as parts of a whole*. The difference of the effect produced upon our minds as we adopt one or the other of these modes of procedure may be very great. This can be made clear by the use of an illustration.

Let us picture to ourselves a number of scientific experts gathered to pronounce a judgment upon certain objects that have just been unearthed, fossil remains of an unknown mammal or bird. What is extraordinary and puzzling is that the remains are of such dimensions, and on so vast a scale, that it is impossible to relate them to any of the existing forms, or to include them in any of the hitherto recognised orders. The men of science are perplexed. Their first impulse is to say that there must have been some mistake, since it is impossible that objects so strange could ever find a place in any scheme of zoology!

But, of course, that is not a view with which they could be content. "Impossible," is not a word with which science can be permanently satisfied. Before long one of the number makes what after all is a very obvious practical suggestion. He proposes that the bones should be fitted together, that it might be seen whether or not they really belonged to one another. If it should prove that they were parts of a whole, then, each of them would fall into its proper place, and would be recognised as

natural in relation to the others, however extraordinary it might have previously appeared to be. (*Note* 2.)

And should it turn out that this was the case, then, if none of the old classes was available, a new class would have to be made, even if this did involve a revision of former opinions. Do we not feel that this would be the right way, indeed the only right way, of dealing with the difficulty ?

There can be no doubt that the events of the Life of Christ, as recorded by the Evangelists, are on a very large scale. They are not to be paralleled in any other human experience. But, while that is true, it is also true that most of the difficulties in regard to them have been felt when the events have been taken separately. Those who have examined them thus, one by one, have exclaimed, " How can we accept the story of a Virgin Birth (*Note* 3) ; or the report of this or that miracle, or the supposed fact of a literal raising of a body from the grave ? "

We must allow that to take any of these in isolation, by itself, and try to fit it into any class of ordinary experience, is to attempt an impossibility. But it may make a very great difference, indeed it does assuredly alter the view of the entire situation, if we follow what is, as we have seen, the reasonable and scientific course. To any one who is perplexed by this or that difficulty, we shall be wise if we say, " Take the parts together, and you will find that they make a whole, and so complete a whole that each part becomes natural in Him, incredible as it certainly would be in any other."

The second consideration is not less necessary. We must never forget that, when we try to include all the parts of the presentation of Christ in the Gospels so as to view them as a whole, this whole comprises much more than the facts that belong more especially to the physical order. Indeed the main marvel has been left untold until it has been said that in Him the great whole contains moral and spiritual qualities which, in the vastness of their range, entirely correspond and harmonise with all else that contributes to constitute the uniqueness of His amazing Personality.

Happily this is an aspect of our Lord's life which is very widely appreciated amongst us. We have had a long line of eloquent teachers who have done their utmost to direct our attention to the more than artistic skill with which the writers of the Gospels have exhibited essential, yet often apparently conflicting, attributes of human character, as blended in Him to make a unity of balanced perfection of beauty.

From the innumerable testimonies to the arresting power of the Gospel portrait of Christ, we may select two, and they are likely to be the more impressive because they come from men of whom it cannot be said that they were biassed in favour of any theological conclusions. They may stand as representatives of the keenest and most independent thought of the century just past, one of them a Professor of History, the other an acknowledged exponent of Physical Science. The first is Professor Goldwin Smith. This was his verdict :

"There are many peculiarities arising out of

personal and historical circumstances, which are incident to the best human characters, and which would prevent any one of them from being universal or final as a type. The good moral characters which we see among men fall, speaking broadly, into two general classes: those which excite our reverence and those which excite our love, the noble and the amiable, the grand and the beautiful. Now, if the type proposed in the Gospels for our invitation were characteristically noble or characteristically amiable, characteristically grand or characteristically beautiful, it might have great moral attractions, but it would not be universal or final. . . . There are differences again between the male and the female character. . . . Had the Gospel type of character been stamped with the peculiar marks of either sex, we should have felt that there was an ideal free from those peculiarities beyond it. But this is not the case. . . .

"There is an equally notable absence of any of the peculiarities which attend particular callings and modes of life. . . . The Christian Type of Character, if it was constructed by human intellect, was constructed at the confluence of three races, the Jewish, the Greek, and the Roman, each of which had strong national peculiarities of its own. A single touch, a single taint of any one of those peculiarities, and the character would have been national, not universal. . . . It has entirely escaped them all.

"There are certain qualities which are not virtues in themselves, but are made virtues by time and circumstance, and with their times and circumstances pass away; yet, while they last, are often naturally

and almost necessarily esteemed above those virtues which are most real and universal. The taint of one of these factitious and temporary virtues would, in the eye of historical philosophy, have been as fatal to the perfection and universality of a type of character as the taint of a positive vice.

"Had the type of character set before us in the Gospels been ascetic, our social experience would have discarded it in the long run. It is not ascetic, though it is the highest exhibition of self-denial.

"What likelihood, then, was there that the imagination of a peasant of Galilee would spring at a bound beyond place and time, and create a type of character perfectly distinct in its personality, yet entirely free from all that entered into the special personalities of the age?

"The essence of man's moral nature, clothed with a personality so vivid and intense as to excite through all ages the most intense affection, yet divested of all those peculiar characteristics, the accidents of place and time, by which human personalities are marked—what other notion than this can philosophy form of Divinity manifest on earth?" Well did the Professor declare—"The world may abandon Christianity, but it can never advance beyond it." (*Note* 4.)

To this there shall be added some remarkable words that were spoken by that most honest and strenuous thinker Dr G. J. Romanes:

"It is only before the presence of Christ that the dry bones of ethical abstraction have sprung into life. Christ may be said to have created the virtues of self-abnegation, universal beneficence, unflinching

humility—indeed the divine supremacy of compassion. Whether Christ be regarded as human or divine, all must agree in regarding the work of His life as by far the greatest work ever achieved in the history of the human race. The more keen the intellectual criticism, the greater is the appreciation of the uniqueness of the personality. Whatever answers different persons may give to the questions, 'What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He?' everyone must agree that 'His name shall be called Wonderful.'" (*Note* 5.)

We have spoken of the impression made upon us by the magnitude of the events which occur in the story of our Lord's earthly life, and we have thought also of the moral and spiritual qualities which lay behind the external manifestation of that life. There can be little doubt that the latter present fewer causes of difficulty to most people at the present time than the occurrences that would more commonly be described as miraculous.

It is, however, to be remembered that the attitude of the educated mind in regard to the "miraculous" is not altogether what it was. While we remain unshaken in our loyalty to the great, and hardly won, conception of the universal prevalence of law, we are realising that purely mechanical explanations do not avail to the extent that was at one time imagined; and further that there may be laws of whose nature and working we have as yet little understanding, and the discovery of which may enable us to see that there are things which are indeed astonishing, but yet are no longer incredible.

A striking passage has often been quoted from one of Professor Harnack's memorable lectures to his students in Berlin. "In our present state of knowledge," he said, "we have become more careful, more hesitating in our judgment, in regard to the stories of the miraculous which we have received from antiquity." Accordingly, he added this as a practical counsel: "If there is anything here" (in the Gospels) "that you find unintelligible, put it quietly aside. Perhaps you will have to leave it there for ever; perhaps the meaning will dawn upon you later, and the story assume a significance of which you never dreamt."

We are learning, moreover, that there are reserves of force within our human nature upon which we can draw at certain times and under special conditions. It is in this way that many of the remarkable effects of psychotherapy are attained. And there are not a few indications that point to the possibility that by fulfilling the necessary moral and spiritual requirements we may, in a larger measure than has ordinarily been supposed, have access to still vaster supplies of the Power that is not ourselves. (*Note* 6.)

If it should be supposed that it must detract from the marvel of our Lord's miracles to imagine that these could in any degree be reproduced by any other, we must remember, not only that He bade His disciples believe that this might be so, but also that He ever assured them that even He Himself was only enabled to do mighty works because He always acted as the agent and instrument of His Father's will. "It was the one thing which Christ

would not suffer—to allow men to suppose that His miracles had no source beyond Himself." (*Note* 7.)

One further consideration ought perhaps to be added. Even if it were to be granted, as is often asserted, that, in the age in which the Gospels appeared, people were credulously ready to believe in miracles, it has to be asked whether the wonders that were likely to have been invented to meet the popular demand would have in the least resembled those which are recorded by our Evangelists (*Note* 8); and whether in such fictitious narrations the wonder-worker would have been represented as conscious that his power was subject to limitation, and as desiring that his wonderful works should not be widely known. In the words of the author of *Ecce Homo* we must conclude that, " this temperance in the use of supernatural power is the masterpiece of Christ. It is a moral miracle superinduced upon a physical one. This repose in greatness makes Him surely the most sublime image ever offered to the human imagination."

NOTES

1. Attempts have been made to show that, when the sources of the Gospel narratives are critically examined, the earliest exhibit fewer traces of the supernatural than the later. But this is precisely what we do not find. The miraculous element is as inextricably embedded in St Mark as it is in St Matthew or St Luke. The writer of *Ecce Homo* was only stating the simple truth when he declared (in the preface to his

fifth edition), that "the fact that Christ appeared as a worker of miracles is the best attested fact in His whole biography."

2. The illustration of the fossil bird was employed by Dr Newman Smyth in his *Old Faiths in New Light*, a book for which many have had cause to be grateful since it was published more than forty years ago.

3. We need not be surprised that the narratives of the miraculous Birth should have been considered startling and incredible. They are not likely to be otherwise regarded unless they are thought of as the accounts of *His* Birth.

There can be no doubt that these accounts form integral parts of the Gospels to which they belong. It is also well to bear in mind that they appear to have emanated from the two persons, Joseph and Mary, whose evidence is that we could most wish for. Such a birth formed no part of the Jewish Messianic expectation, and cannot therefore have been imagined to meet a popular demand. Moreover, it is to be remembered that no ethnic parallel to a birth from a pure virgin has been found.

We dare not assert that there can be no true acknowledgment of the Divine Sonship of our Lord without the acceptance of His miraculous Birth. It may be that it formed no part of the earliest preaching of the Gospel. There was no reference to it in the original Creed of Nicæa, though it was included in the second-century versions of the Apostles' Creed. None

the less we may feel strongly that the belief in the Divine Sonship is made more consistent, and in the highest degree more rational, by its presentation in the form in which it has so long commended itself to the Christian consciousness. We can most reverently say, with St Ambrose, that "such a birth is becoming to God" (*Talis decet partus Deum*).

A good deal has been made of certain readings in the Sinai Syriac text of St Matthew i. In verse 16 the words are given thus: "Joseph, to whom was betrothed Mary the Virgin, begat Jesus," and in verses 21 and 25 we read, "she shall bare to thee a son," "she bare to him a son." But there is no sufficient reason for thinking that these peculiarities represent the original text of the Gospel, and that they cannot have been intended to contradict the story itself is evident from the fact that the narrative which follows is left undisturbed.

Sir W. M. Ramsay holds that St Luke's Birth-narrative may have come to him from the Blessed Virgin, or some one intimate with her. "There is a womanly spirit," he says, "in the whole narrative, which seems inconsistent with the transmission from man to man."—*Was Christ born at Bethlehem?* p. 88.

4. *Lectures on the Study of History*, Oxford, 1865.

5. Address at Toynbee Hall, 1889 (*Life and Letters*, p. 227).

"Let intellectual and spiritual culture progress, and the human mind expand, as much as

it will; beyond the grandeur and the moral elevation of Christianity, as it sparkles and shines in the Gospels, the human mind will not advance."—Goethe (quoted by Harnack, *What is Christianity?* p. 4).

6. It is of no little interest to recall the following passage from a book by the author of *Tom Brown's School Days:*

"While it may be readily admitted that Christ wielded a dominion over all created things as well as over man, which no other human being has ever approached, it seems to me to be going quite beyond what can be proved, or even fairly assumed, to speak of His miracles as supernatural, in the sense that no man has ever done, or can ever do, the like. The evidence is surely all the other way, and seems rather to indicate, that if we could only have lived up to the standard which we acknowledge in our inmost hearts to be the true one—could only have obeyed every motion and warning of the voice of God speaking in our hearts from the day when we first became conscious of, and could hear it—if, in other words, our wills had from the first been disciplined, like the will of Christ, so as to be in perfect accord with the will of God—I see no reason to doubt that we too should have gained the power and the courage to show signs, or, if you please, to work miracles, as Christ and His apostles worked them."—T. Hughes, *The Manliness of Christ*, pp. 69 f.

7. Dr A. J. Mason, *Conditions of our Lord's Life on Earth*, p. 89.

8. "We may say with confidence that, if the miracles of Jesus had been no more than an invention, they would not have been what they are."—Dr Sanday, *Hastings' D. of B.*, ii. p. 626.

VII

HIS PLACE IN DEVELOPMENT

It is a sure sign that we are advancing in wisdom when we are able to look kindly upon a difficulty. Difficulties call forth our powers, and teach us perseverance. It has been through the narrow gate of difficulty that the greatest discoverers have found their way into the wider courts of truth. We should be badly off without our difficulties.

If this is so when we are engaged in the pursuit of other sorts of knowledge, it is certainly so when we are seeking to attain to that higher knowledge which, when it is combined with courage, we call faith. Difficulties in the way of faith are the hardest to bear. They may be a cause of great misery. But here again they may, if they are dealt with honestly and patiently, lead to unexpected light and gladness. (*Note* 1.)

In the last chapter we tried to deal frankly with a difficulty that can scarcely fail to meet us when we look at the wonderful facts of the Life of Christ as presented in the Gospels. It is to be hoped that we were able to see that these facts, though at first sight, and when taken separately, they might not unreasonably be regarded with incredulous astonish-

ment, wear a different look when they are fitted together, and combine to make a very natural whole. So true it is that faith, like philosophy, may begin in wonder and end in admiration.

We must now attempt to deal with yet another difficulty which we ought not to pass by. It is a difficulty that specially belongs to our own age and, even if we do not feel it ourselves, we are almost certain to meet with it in others. Some of us have known those to whom it has been a source of much painful perplexity.

To give such an instance. Two strangers had met a few years ago as fellow-travellers in a steamer on a Canadian lake. They became engaged in a serious conversation about the things of the faith ; and one of them spoke of a matter which had for some time been puzzling him when he thought of the Life of our Lord. How was it possible, this was the question, to reconcile the belief that our Lord was a perfect human being with what science has taught us to expect in its doctrine of gradual evolution ? Does not this doctrine imply that what is perfect can only appear as the ultimate stage of a long continued process ? How, then, is it conceivable that human perfection could be attained at so early a point in the history of the progress of mankind ?

The difficulty has been felt by many thoughtful persons. To some it has seemed so formidable that it has very seriously affected their belief. It was thus regarded by Strauss, a prominent leader of destructive Biblical criticism in the middle of the last century. He confidently asserted, relying as he did upon the accepted scientific teaching of his day, that

" it is against all analogy that the fulness of perfection should be met with at the outset of any evolution whatsoever." (*Note* 2.) That, then, is the problem. What are we to make of it? Is it possible that this is a difficulty for which we may have cause to be thankful because it has guided us to wider vision and to a firmer standing ground? Let us think of the directions in which we may look to find help.

In the first place, it is very necessary that we should keep ourselves, as far as we can, up to date scientifically. Now no doubt it is for most of us a hazardous thing to assert that science teaches this or the other. But important changes do occur in the teachings of science which are so clearly marked that they may be understood by all who really care to follow them. One of the most notable of these changes has been made in the doctrine of Evolution since it was formulated some seventy years ago. The biologist has insisted that the older conception of " preformation," according to which evolution was regarded as a merely mechanical unfolding of already existing material, will not account for the facts as we know them. It is now contended that allowance has to be made for the possibility of new beginnings, " downright novelties," entirely fresh starts. Accordingly, we are hearing a good deal of the principle of " epigenesis," as it is termed; and we have become familiarised with the phrase, " creative evolution." (*Note* 3.)

What it amounts to is this. The process of evolution is not any longer to be thought of as an invari-

able and calculable operation by which certain well defined antecedent causes lead, and must necessarily lead, to corresponding consequent effects. Room has to be found for the emergence of the unexpected, for arrivals and appearances that could not have been predicted beforehand.

It follows, as any one can see, that there is nothing in this enlarged presentation of the doctrine of development to preclude the belief that a wholly new and vital force appeared in the Incarnation, marking the inauguration of a new epoch in the onward march of humanity. Indeed, the more modern view of development would encourage us to expect it. We may find before long that the effects of this change of view may show themselves in a much altered treatment of not a few historical problems. (*Note* 4.)

But, if it is most desirable to keep ourselves up to date scientifically, it is even more essential that, as Biblical students, we should be rightly informed theologically. To some it almost brings a shock of surprise—as seemed to be the case with the inquirer on the Canadian boat—to be reminded of what the New Testament has told us about the great society that is being built up of elements gathered from the whole of mankind to serve as a Body of Christ, in and through which the fulness of His humanity is to be more completely manifested than it could be in the days when He was here in the flesh.

As we know, it was the vision of this great fulfilment that gave to St Paul the long hidden clue to

the purpose of the ages, and supplied the main motive of his missionary labours. He made it clear that all he did and suffered was "for the Body's sake." When he thought of Christ, it was of One who had lived and died, "yea, rather," had "risen again," that He might be "the Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body"; and for the completion of which, startling as it is to say it, He is waiting and will wait "until," as the Apostle expresses it, "we all (collectively) attain unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ"—the Christ of whom our own poet has sung as "the Christ that is to be."

What can all this mean if it does not imply that the earthly life of our Lord was far from being an end? Must we not believe that it was, on the contrary, the beginning, the new start and promise of that remaking of Man of which we are some day to see the accomplishment, and in which each one of us is called to take a share?

Is it too much to say that the recognition of this truth as to the place of our Lord's earthly life in the great order of development is just what is needed to bring a fresh and quite unexpected interest to many in connexion with their study of the Gospels? We know that there is nothing in this world quite so fascinating to watch as growth, and the attraction is greatest when it is the growth of exceptional power towards unwonted intellectual effectiveness and spiritual success. The life of Christ on earth must be full of wonder for any intelligent observer; but the marvel is beyond measure increased when it is regarded as a step in the progress of the

Ascent of Man; as the stage through which the supreme Leader of the race had to pass in order that He might undergo the discipline by which eventually He could be enabled to discharge to the utmost functions that required for their heightening and enlargement the experience of suffering and the emancipation of death.

How little is to be feared, and how great a gain is to be expected, from the application of these thoughts to the study of the Gospels may perhaps be best illustrated by such statements as these, which are taken from a very able work by one who is not at all likely to be accused of any dangerous latitudinarian tendencies:

"The divine power mediated by the Incarnate when an infant was almost immeasurably less than was His power when going forth to His death." "Of course, the communion of the Incarnate with the Father when He was but twelve years old was not that which He had in the Transfiguration or on Calvary." "The Incarnate as boy was not able to be the head of the Church." "His Ascension is the enlargement of His human capacities to a degree that we cannot measure, and it carries with it a corresponding increase of the content of His consciousness and of the exercise of His powers." (*Note* 5.)

The subject thus opened is immense, and more cannot be said of it here. It must suffice if something has been done to make good our assertion that a seemingly insoluble difficulty may so change its character as to be no longer a hindrance, but a

most welcome help to the growth and enlargement of intelligent belief. Shall we be wrong if we say that, so far from its being impossible to think of our Lord's life on earth as having a place in the great programme of the world's creative evolution, we shall never fully realise what that life meant for Him, and means for ourselves, until we have accustomed our minds to contemplate it thus? (*Note* 6.)

NOTES

1. It has to be remembered that there is a serious danger which attends the refusal to be candid and brave in dealing with a difficulty. Difficulties which are not frankly faced may, when they are suppressed, disappear into the subconscious region, and there in the shape of "complexes" become sources of unrest and disturbance. In this way they can do much to undermine the confidence of faith, and may be a quite unsuspected cause of intellectual and spiritual distress. The gain is often correspondingly great when they are brought to the light and robbed of their terror.

2. Quoted by Dr Inge, *Contentio Veritatis*, p. 101.

3. "What biology seems justified in holding firm to is that there has been a frequent *epigenesis*, or new formation." "It may be very naïve on the biologist's part, but it does not appear likely that any argument that being is a fixed quantity will affect his belief that insects and

birds were downright novelties." "Evolution is . . . a series of great inventions."—Prof. J. A. Thompson, *System of Animate Nature*, p. 367.

4. In an Essay on *The Absoluteness of Christianity and the History of Religion*, Professor Troeltsch, writing as an historian, raised this question, "How can we have finality before the final term of a series?" In his reply he maintained that the essence of history is "the rise of the Individual and Particular within the working of the force given to every age; and this, not so much as a derivation, but as a new creation out of the transcendental depths of history." "Every epoch," he said, "has immediate access to God."—See Von Hügel, *Essays and Addresses*, p. 187.

5. Dr Weston, Bishop of Zanzibar, *The One Christ* (second edition), pp. 161, 158, 322, 320.

6. Among the lines of thought that may be followed with advantage it might be useful to consider how this larger view of the place and purpose of the Incarnation can contribute to advance the cause of Christian Reunion; how, that is to say, Evangelicals and Catholics and Liberals may find in it what they severally, and collectively, should be most concerned to maintain. And have we not here also a hint of the right treatment of an objection which is often in evidence at the present time? Is it not true to say that much of the unwillingness, that shows itself especially in the English-speaking world, to accept the historic doctrine of the Incarna-

tion arises from a dislike of the thought that the Divine Sonship of Christ is in its nature unique, and is therefore different in kind as well as in degree from that of the rest of the sons of men. Thus we find that, while a writer like Professor Pringle Pattison can say, " ' God manifest in the flesh ' is a more profound philosophical truth than the loftiest flight of speculation that outsoars all predicates and, for the greater glory of God, declares Him unknowable," he nevertheless feels it necessary to make the complaint that this " Incarnation of the Son has been limited to a single individual."—*The Idea of God*, pp. 157, 409.

The true answer to this objection is, surely, to explain that, if " the only begotten Son " appeared without equal or rival, it was that He might enable those who believe on Him to " become children of God," and thus Himself be made " the first-born of many brethren." What is needed is an understanding of the full doctrine of an extended and completed Incarnation in which each individual may have his share.

VIII

THE MYSTERY OF HIS PERSON

We hear much in these days about the Modern Mind and its requirements. We feel that the term stands for something that is real, though we may make few attempts to arrive at any definite conception of what that is. Perhaps we should not be wrong in saying that the modern mind has been the outcome of the working of three factors, from whose influence it is impossible for any of us entirely to free ourselves if we desired to do so. They may be described as the emergence of a new sense, the arrival of a new category, and the discovery of a new science.

The new sense is, of course, the Historical Sense. This, though we may not always realise the fact, is a recent acquisition. It has brought with it a perception of perspective and proportion, of light and shade; and it has enabled us in an extraordinary way to recreate and reproduce the past.

To satisfy the demands of this sense students of the New Testament have been at work for more than fifty years, with results of which in the case of the Gospels we have spoken at some length. Happily we can say that the Gospel records have not suffered under the testing process. On the contrary, their value as history has been increasingly appreciated.

When we describe the second factor as the arrival of a new category, it need scarcely be explained that the reference is to the doctrine of Evolution. We have no option but to employ this category whenever we are dealing with any vital matter. It is not enough to be assured that this or that is a fact. We feel bound to go on to ask how it stands in relation to other facts, what place it holds in their series. Accordingly, we have thought it necessary to consider the position that is occupied by the most wonderful of all facts, the Incarnation, in the long procession of events that make up the history of human progress. The result of our inquiry, to state it concisely, was to show that we cannot hope to be able to accept any account of the Incarnation which does not include the thought of its extension in the Church.

It is time now to turn our minds to the problems which have arisen, not indeed for the first time, but with an unprecedented degree of insistence, as the result of what we have called the discovery of a new science. This is the science, still in its infancy, of Psychological Analysis. At last we have come to see that we cannot be satisfied with the knowledge of a merely external world ; but must set to work, with every available instrument and with all our powers, to gain what knowledge we can of our inmost selves. Consequently, we are much engaged with problems of the conscious and the subconscious, and with questions as to the validity of our conceptions of the ego, and of the essentials that constitute personality. Sooner or later it was inevitable that the new thought and the new methods should be

brought to bear upon the recorded life and experience of Him whose Personality has been, and in very truth is, the greatest of the forces in history.

Those have some right on their side, undoubtedly, who warn us that the modern science of psychology is as yet very far from being sufficiently sure of its conclusions to issue what can be received as authoritative judgments. But, none the less, the science is with us ; and, if we are wise, we shall not delay too long to take note of its investigations and to form some opinion as to their probable effects. (*Note* 1.)

Having said so much, then, by way of preface, let us go on to consider what new light, if any, is likely to come from psychology upon the most mysterious of all subjects—the Person of Christ.

To begin with, we had better make sure that we rightly understand the character of the efforts at interpretation that have been made in the past. There are those who talk as if our first duty must be to cut ourselves loose from all the old definitions, and in particular from the well-known pronouncements of the great ecumenical councils, which for centuries have been held in reverent esteem. If we ask why we should do this, we are likely to be told that these decisions were made by men who were determined at all costs to bring their faith into accord with the philosophy of their age, and who marred its simplicity by the intrusion into it of more than dubious metaphysics.

Those who have seriously studied early Church history do not need to be informed that all this is precisely what the fathers of the great councils were

most anxious and careful not to do. As a matter of fact their aim was strictly conservative. They were determined to make a fence round the realities of the Incarnation, as these are set forth in the Gospels. They might employ new terms, but they did so only that they might protect the old truths. They were concerned to insist with an impartial emphasis upon what they held to be the facts, and took every precaution they could take in order that they might guard these against superfluous subtleties on the one side, and superficial simplifications on the other. (*Note* 2.) And they did their work so effectively that it has remained unaltered, and in the main unchallenged, all through the centuries. (*Note* 3.) The decisions of Chalcedon have been spoken of as "a disappointment," and even as "a confession of the bankruptcy of Greek patristic theology." A more sound and generous judgment has arrived at the conclusion that, "the General Councils, by rejecting premature theories, kept open the central problem of Christian theology for future days, when Christian experience and thought might be riper for its progressive solution." (*Note* 4.)

We have to allow that the language of the fourth and fifth centuries is not altogether our language, however carefully we may construe it. (*Note* 5.) We can with difficulty recover what was then meant by "Nature," nor can we feel that the word which we render "Person" had the significance then which it now has for us. And yet it is by no means certain that we shall be able to find a substitute for either term that will be more satisfactory. (*Note* 6.)

What we may rightly judge to have been a serious

defect of the old teaching was the dualism which it passed on unresolved. The influence of this dualism has been seen in the way in which theologians, down to our own time, have deemed it permissible to speak as if our Lord sometimes thought and acted as a Divine Being, and then again sometimes only as a man. (*Note* 7.) Our aim must be to advance, if we can, towards a conception which will include all the elements that went to make the fulness of our Lord's life, while at the same time it does justice to the conviction that in the Gospel story we are everywhere reading of an individual Person possessed of a single consciousness.

Passing now to our present-day inquiries, we know how Dr Sanday, with characteristic enthusiasm, welcomed the contribution that he believed psychology is to make, more especially by its doctrine of the subconscious mind. We shall not be wrong in thinking that full justice has yet to be done to the courage and suggestiveness of his remarkable book *Christology and Personality*.

"The great gain," so he declared, "from the recognition of the subliminal activities of consciousness lies in the fact that it reduces the conscious self to its proper proportions, and makes us realise in a way we hardly did realise how much larger the Whole Self is than the limited part of it. And, in like manner, the application of this analogy to the Life of Christ enables us to realise it much more in its true proportion—in the proportion, that is, which the human life as lived on earth really bore to the whole transcendent manifestation of the Son of God." (*Note* 8.)

We may have good hope that the attempts which are being made to unveil the region of the subconscious as the ground in which our mental and moral life has its roots, and finds its sustenance, will help to deepen our understanding and widen our conception of the fulness and range of personality, even if we have to admit that the ultimate source of personality, and the determining conditions of distinctive individuality, are still mysteries beyond our reach.

There is some hope, too, that the co-operation which is now taking place between philosophy and psychology may result in a better understanding of certain of the old problems of the mind and soul. Already it is beginning to be perceived that the once accepted notions of the impenetrability and isolation of the personal unit will have to be modified so as to allow for its inclusion within the vital influences of the larger whole, and there is a growing sense that there can be not only no contradiction between the Universal Absolute and the particular relative, but that the recognition of the former is essential to the intelligibility of the latter. Moreover, doubts are increasing as to whether we have not made a mistake by identifying the real personality of any man with his *ego*, or form of individual consciousness, which is after all an abstraction of his own mind. It would seem that " the empirical ego," the self of which I am conscious, cannot be co-extensive with all that is contained in myself; for, if I am aware of myself, that must mean that I am a subject as well as an object.

Then, also, it is important to realise that upon

which Lotze was wont to lay stress many years ago, the fact that we are as yet only *becoming* persons ; and that the best we can show at present is but a pale anticipation of what we may be. With us personality is in the making, and is very far as yet from its complete attainment. It is " that concrete wholeness of being and character which self-consciousness limits and often mars, and which no man on this side of death fully and finally achieves."

These words which we have just quoted are followed, in their original context, by others that are very significant as coming from a careful student of recent philosophy. " Suppose that the only real and ultimate Personality of Jesus is God. We need not deny that the Divine Person might have been the true personality of one who in His human growth was limited by the form of an individual self-consciousness and human ' I '-hood ; yet in that case the human ego could not have been fully conscious, as it grew, of the whole nature of the Person which ultimately it was. The full Godhead would have been present in the manhood, yet not fully present to the consciousness of the man. This means that in the mind of our Lord on earth there would constantly have been a certain tension between the limitation imposed by His human self-consciousness and the Deity by which His human individuality was being taken up, and into which it was under conditions of space and time truly developing. Our Lord as a man would have been in an indefinable degree conscious that He was yet more than man ; and this consciousness and the tension produced by

it would have become clearer and more definite as His human individuality grew. It is something of this kind which the synoptic narratives, *prima facie*, suggest." (*Note* 9.)

Some of us may feel that we are getting here into depths in which we quickly lose our foothold. Let us, then, say the little that remains to be said as simply as we can.

There are obvious difficulties that confront us when we are thinking of the problem of the Person of Christ. There is the dualism between the two natures, of which we have spoken. If we are to be loyal to the facts of the Gospels, we must, as we have said, hold fast to the belief that in our Lord there was a single consciousness and a single personality, whatever may have been the stages of advance as He "increased in wisdom and in favour with God and man." (*Note* 10.)

But, while we thus keep clear of dualism, we must be on our guard against an even more perilous untruth which lies in the opposite direction. There is an easy monism that is to be shunned as earnestly as any dualism. It may seem a short way of settling our difficulties when we are asked to dismiss them with the formula—"the modern Churchman differs from the Chalcedonian Fathers by holding that the substances of the Deity and of the Humanity are not two but one"; but the danger of such a position might seem to be too obvious to admit of discussion. Indeed a strong protest was made by one of the members of the Conference at which this statement was put forward:

"If we say 'human nature is divine' and stop

there, we enter upon a line of thought which ends in the Hindoo theology, or the very similar Absolutist philosophy, which recognises no cosmic significance in human morality, and places God 'beyond good and evil.'" (*Note* 11.)

Perhaps, when all has been said, we shall be wise to admit the possibility that our intellectual faculties may only be capable of apprehending truth in the form of paradox. (*Note* 12.) And it is important to remember that the evidence of the greatest truth "is to be found in the light which it brings, far more than in any light which it receives." (*Note* 13.) Surely we must not be greatly surprised if it should prove to be the case that we cannot fully account for that which we confess to be unique. Explanations at the best are partial and transitory. The comfort is that the Reality abides.

"Our little systems have their day,

. . . . . .

And Thou, O Lord, art more than they."

NOTES

1. As long ago as 1857 Archbishop Temple wrote: "Our theology has been cast in a scholastic mould, that is all based on Logic. We are in need of, and we are being gradually faced with, a theology based on psychology. The transition, I fear, will not be without much pain; but nothing can prevent it."—*Memoirs*, ii. p. 517.

2. "The only true and historical way of regarding these dogmatic decisions is to regard them as primarily negative."

"It is very necessary to protest that the Church was not professing to act philosophically. It chose the term 'of one substance' to exclude the idea that Christ was not really God, and then to exclude the idea that He was not really man."—Bishop Gore, *Belief in Christ*, pp. 218, 220.

3. It is interesting to note the following account which Froude gave of a conversation he once had with Carlyle:

"In earlier days he had spoken contemptuously of the Athanasian controversy—of the Christian world torn in pieces over a diphthong; and he would ring the changes in broad Annandale on the Homoousion and the Homoiousion. He now told me that he perceived Christianity itself to have been at stake. If the Arians had won, it would have dwindled away to a legend."—*Carlyle's Life in London*, ii. 462.

Similarly Lord Morley wrote:

"If it be right to judge that no false system ever struck more directly at the very life of Christianity than Arianism, then the proscription of Arius and the triumph of Athanasius was an infinitely more potent thing in the history of Western mankind than the fall of the Bastille and all the principles of either French or American Revolution."—*Notes on Politics and History*, p. 54.

4. *Christianity in History*, V. Bartlet and A. J. Carlyle, p. 278.

5. The famous declaration of the Council of Chalcedon, 451 A.D., contained these words:

"Following the holy Fathers we confess our Lord Jesus Christ one and the same Son, the same perfect in Godhead, the same perfect in manhood . . . of one substance (*homoousion*) with the Father as touching the Godhead, the same of one substance (*homoousion*) with us as touching the manhood . . . to be acknowledged in two natures, without confusion, without conversion, without division, never to be separated: the difference of His natures being in no way taken away in consequence of their union, but the peculiarity of either nature being rather preserved, and combining into one Person (*prosopon*) and one Substance (*hypostasis*)."

6. "The Chalcedonian formula did one good service; for it asserted the integrity and the reality of Christ's human nature."—Canon Glazebrook, Opening Address at the Cambridge Conference, 1921.

"It was practical necessity which led to its selecting an old word which hitherto had meant no more than 'substance' (*i.e.* hypostasis) and stamping it with the distinctive meaning of 'person,' an idea for which hitherto Greek and Latin philosophy had had no term."

"I do not see that it could have chosen a better word to use than 'nature' when it

affirmed in Christ's one person two 'natures,' the one original and the other acquired . . . nor do I see how the terminology could be bettered to-day."

"The Latin word 'persona,' which meaning first the actor's mask, and then his 'part' or the character which he represented, and then the part which everyone is called to play in life, was already trembling on the verge of meaning what we mean by a person. The Fathers are profuse in their apologies for the inadequacy of these terms."

"Granted the sort of Realism which believes in real objects having distinctive natures, and in real persons, and in a real God the Creator, I do not think the terminology of the Councils can be easily bettered."—Bishop Gore, *Belief in Christ*, pp. 221, 244, 222.

7. "It is unscriptural, though the practice is supported by strong patristic authority, to regard the Lord during His historic life, as acting now by His human and now by His divine nature only. The two natures were inseparably combined in the unity of His person."—Dr Westcott, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 66.

8. Dr Sanday, *Christology and Personality*, Part I., p. 166.

9. Canon O. C. Quick, *Liberalism, Modernism, and Tradition*, pp. 142 f.

10. "The identity of the divine personality throughout seems to involve the idea of Christ's man-

hood as 'impersonal.' So the theologians have constantly called it. But it is a wholly unacceptable idea. It is precisely in Jesus, 'the Son of Man,' that we seem to see all the characteristics of human personality at their highest."—Bishop Gore, *Belief in Christ*, p. 218.

11. Dr Rashdall, Cambridge Conference, 1921.
"The self-consciousness of Jesus breaks the frame of a purely human life, and the experience of believers in all the Christian centuries confirms the assumption that the disciples of Jesus were right in seeing more in Him than a mere man."—Dr Loofs, *What is the Truth about Jesus Christ?* p. 201.

12. "I can see myself and all humanity in every individual act or incident of the human life of our Lord—but also I can see all of God, and all that is divinest and best of God, in the person of Jesus Christ reconciling and uniting the world unto Himself. How shall I know Him or express Him? As deified humanity, or as humanised Deity? I believe that I can know Him as neither without knowing Him as both."
—Dr Du Bose, *The Reason of Life*, p. 8.

13. Dr Hort, *The Way, the Truth, the Life*, pp. 11 f.

IX

HIS TEACHING ABOUT GOD

If what we have been saying and thinking so far has served any good purpose, it has increased our desire to know still more of Him who has been the subject of our thoughts. Up to this point we have been gazing at the figure of Christ as it were from a distance ; separated from us, not merely by time and space, but by the majesty and mystery which make Him unapproachable and unique. Nevertheless, we are conscious of an attraction that draws and encourages us to advance to a yet closer and more intimate acquaintance. We would enter more deeply into His mind and share, if we may, His outlook. Remembering His words " Learn of Me," we venture to take them as an invitation to ourselves to join His school and be numbered among His disciples. And indeed it may be so, for in the Gospels ample provision is made for the knowledge of the Mind of Christ. We shall never get to the end of it. Live as long as we may, we shall, like the old master, be " still learning." Our next task, then, must be to gather what we can of the general character and contents of the teaching of our Lord.

Let us begin by saying that it bears unmistakably

the two marks which we have learnt to associate with the largest and loftiest thinking. These are Sublimity and Simplicity. The more transcendent His theme, the more manifest is the skill by which it is brought within the reach and comprehension of the humblest.

And there is another thing that must strike us as we listen to His words. He never, or almost never, argues. We have been told that "in spiritual things argument is no good at all, except in so far as it may make an opponent feel that he is not so clever as he thought he was"; and certainly the conclusion that rests upon argument is not the same thing as the conviction which results from the vision of inevitable truth. Again and again we are made to feel that our Lord was speaking of that which He Himself knew by direct intuition, and was aiming to lead His hearers to an immediate apprehension of a self-evidencing reality. It is in this way that we can best explain the use which He habitually made of parables. There is reason for thinking that in this He was not following precedents that had been set by the Jewish teachers, but was adopting a method which was all the more effective because it was unfamiliar.

The parable was a means of conveying truths to minds that could not easily grasp abstract ideas.

So certain is it that

> "Truth in closest words shall fail,
> When truth embodied in a tale
> Shall enter in at lowly doors."

But, if the parable was an admirable means of imparting instruction, it served also to temper and

shade the light for eyes that would otherwise have been blinded by it. It was as the cloud in which the higher wisdom both revealed and veiled itself. For many the earthly story held no heavenly meaning; while others gradually perceived as much as they were able to bear. In the few it excited a longing for the further illumination which the Teacher was waiting to give to those who were ready to be more fully initiated. (*Note* 1.)

We can wish for no more signal illustration of all this than the way in which our Lord dealt with the great theme which must always stand first among the lessons of life. A distinguished jurist was once asked to say what was the greatest thought that had ever engaged his mind. With no hesitation, and with the utmost reverence, he declared that it was the thought of God. The child wants to know what God is like, and what He is doing. If the grown man abandons the quest for such knowledge, it is only because he despairs of finding anyone who can give him any real information, or can express it in terms that are not incomprehensible.

How, then, does our Lord deal with this the sublimest of all themes? Let us listen to Him, as He delivers His most elementary lesson upon it. We shall find this in the parable of the Lost Sheep, in the fifteenth chapter of St Luke. However familiar the lesson is, we may be sure that every time we think about it we shall discover in it something that is new; something, perhaps, that is startlingly new.

Notice how the great Teacher begins. To whom

does He more especially address Himself? Does He say, "Let the professors and doctors of divinity listen to Me"? They were there, and He means His words to reach them; but He is not going to speak to them in the first instance. What He says is this, "Is there a man here who knows about keeping sheep? If so, I think I can make the matter intelligible to him. He understands the qualities that are needed to make a good shepherd; and, understanding these, he will be able to understand something of the life of God." Accordingly, He proceeds to explain what exactly these qualities are, and He does it in a way that His hearers could never forget.

In the first place, a shepherd is to be known by his thoughts.

What does he think of? The good shepherd thinks of his sheep; and, if one of them has gone astray, he thinks the more of it; indeed he thinks, as men say, "everything" of that one. In his eyes that one, for the time being, is the only one. This may not be true in logic, but logic by itself can explain very few of our mysteries. Enough that it is true to life. It is this power of intense devotion which is the first requisite of a really good shepherd.

And our Lord would have men believe that it is just this quality that makes a good God! God's creatures are His interests; and those in particular who need Him most. It matters not that they are not in themselves the most valuable; they are the most valuable to Him. It is the soul that has wandered and gone astray upon which God's care is specially concentrated; it is this soul that He counts it an unspeakable disaster to have lost.

And there is more to be told. The good shepherd is not long in turning his thoughts into actions. He sets off at once on the work of the search, and has no notion of resting until the task is accomplished. It is more than likely that his skill and his patience will be sorely taxed. There may be some of us who have watched the actual process; possibly amid the very conditions that were contemplated in the parable. The writer and a friend were once watching some shepherds who were tending their flocks on the hillside in the open fields not far from the town of Bethlehem. As they looked with deep interest on such a sight in such surroundings, a scene was enacted which they will always remember. A little kid got away from the flock, and a shepherd ran after it. In the most provoking fashion the tiny creature eluded him, escaping again and again when it seemed on the point of being captured. At last the shepherd could stand it no longer. His club whirled through the air, and brought down the truant to be picked up half-stunned by the blow. With glee our Syrian dragoman shouted—"The parable of the lost sheep!" Yes, but with what a difference. The good shepherd does not lose patience; and he does not run the risk of injuring his sheep. When he has found it, he takes it up tenderly and carries it home. Our Lord would have it understood that such persistency and gentleness are not merely human, but divine.

But even this does not exhaust the teaching of His parable. There is a test of character which goes still deeper than thought, and further than action; it is the test of feeling. And there is no indication of

feeling so certain as that of joy. A man has but to let us know what it is that gives him his greatest pleasure, and we can tell him what he really is. The final proof of the goodness of the shepherd is to be seen in this, that, when he has succeeded, his delight is so overflowing that he must find others to share it with him. "When he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and his neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost."

More than one attempt has been made to apply this criterion to the character of God. The philosopher Aristotle, for example, maintained that the joy of God consists in "thinking upon thought"; and very like a philosopher's conception that was. It was nobler, however, than the conclusion of the Rabbi who declared that "there is joy in the presence of the Place"—the divine dwelling-place—"when those who provoke Him to anger disappear from the world." (*Note* 2.)

Far different from either was the ideal to which our Lord would uplift the hearts of men. Not in the solitary calm of undisturbed contemplation, much less in the exercise of arbitrary power to crush out opposition to His will; not in these does the pleasure of God consist. It is when any one of us does better, and longs to do better still, that God rejoices in His high heaven. "I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God"—joy which they are permitted to see and to share—"over one sinner that repenteth."

The question may be asked whether after all this teaching went much beyond that of the exquisite

twenty-third Psalm. Strictly speaking, it did not, for we must be careful how we argue that the blessings of the Old Testament applied to the nation only, and not to the individual. (*Note* 3.) But, even if it can be shown that the teaching of a Divine Shepherd's care did enter into the thought and experience of all devout Israelites, we need fear no contradiction when we say that the form in which the teaching is given in the Gospel is more convincing and unforgettable than any in which it had previously been expressed.

Moreover, the new Teacher was not content to limit Himself to that which had been said in the ancient time. He had more things to bring forth from His treasures, and among these were things that were new as well as old. His language as He ended the parable of the lost sheep, and that of the lost silver which was a variation of the same theme, must have prepared His hearers for what was to follow. He had struck a trembling chord as once and again He had told of the feeling of God towards the repentant sinner. There must have been some who listened who would be anxious to receive a further assurance as to the certainty of that. If so, their need was met by the parable which was added to supplement the others, the pearl of parables, the story of the Prodigal Son. If the language of the other parables was specially intelligible to those of a particular class or occupation, the language of this would appeal to the universal instinct of all who knew anything of the life and the problems of a family. Possibly those have been right who have wished that it had been generally referred to as the Parable of the

Good Father. Certainly it is as such that it really lives in the memory. The wandering and returning boy, with the conventionally correct and unresponsive elder brother, occupy a large space in the narrative; but at its centre irradiating all is the wise and tender-hearted Father, knowing what can be done by restraint, and what has to be learnt in liberty, loving and grieving, hoping and watching, till at last he has the delight of welcoming and restoring. Nothing that has been penned has equalled the power of this simple story to enthral and subdue and uplift the conscience and heart of humanity. If the *Pastor Meus* of the Old Testament is rightly loved for its truth and its beauty, we need not be afraid to say that the *Pater Noster* of the New Testament is even more beautiful and therefore, if that be possible, even more true.

We are not told of the effect that was produced upon the hearers by what they had heard. We can imagine that it was received by many with no little amazement. Alas! it is a dark and menacing heaven of their own imagining under which the majority of men and women spend most of their anxious and struggling lives. There must have been those that day who went away saying—what a man who had been a notorious unbeliever exclaimed after listening to a sermon by one of our most Christlike preachers in the East of London—"That is a God I never heard of before!"

It is not said that on this occasion our Lord was questioned by His inner circle of disciples in

regard to any difficulties that His words may have raised in their minds.

Of this, however, we may be sure, that sooner or later they would be desirous of asking that they might be told more. We know that as a matter of fact it was so. The great name of "Father" was often on His lips, as indeed we have reason to suppose that it was commonly used by religious people at that time. (*Note* 4.) He had done much to help them to understand what it meant. (*Note* 5.) But there was still the difficulty that after all it was a name, a term, a metaphor, a verbal proposition. Might there not be some further revelation that would make it more concrete and real, less abstract and vague? Might they presume to suggest such a thing? Yes, they would venture to tell Him what they wanted; and they did. "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us."

We have His reply. It has been enshrined in the very centre of the belief of Christendom—"He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father." It was as if the eldest brother of a family, when the younger children were asking to know what their father, whom they had not known, was like, were to say, "You may judge what he is by what you have seen in me!" Assuredly no bolder thing has ever been uttered than this unqualified announcement that the unseen God is actually imaged and revealed in the One who claimed to be His well-beloved Son.

And He had no thought of allowing them to shrink from the most uncompromising acceptance of His meaning. "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." They knew He was incapable of deceiving

them. Such a statement from Him was all they could ask. Well might they say, "Lo, now speakest Thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that Thou knowest all things. By this we believe that Thou camest forth from God."

We cannot suppose that all that had been told them could be understood when they heard it.

Those who have received some astounding revelation of truth are wont to ask that time may be given them to think over in silence what is not to be assimilated at once, and without deep meditation. If we had known those disciples we might have perceived that this was their attitude and feeling. And it was to be so. The days immediately before them would not furnish many opportunities for quiet and continuous thought, though all that was to happen would eventually prove to have been a necessary commentary upon what they had learned; and they were to be supplied with a Helper who would enable them to make the most of their experiences. But the process of this higher education would of necessity be slow, and it might bring with it many surprises.

Among the books that have been written in recent years on the problems connected with the growth of early Christian thought, there are none that are more worthy of attention than the volumes of lectures delivered at Oxford by Josiah Royce, the Harvard Professor of Philosophy. They deal expressly with the development of the distinctively Christian ideas, and with the gradual emergence of the earliest theological beliefs. The whole treatment is that of an exceptionally able observer who came freshly to his subject and was evidently under the impression

that he was discovering what had been previously unseen. What is more especially interesting and valuable is his repeated insistence that this growth of belief cannot have been the outcome of intellectual speculation, but was the necessary result of the pressure of facts which could not be otherwise interpreted. It came about as the inevitable conclusion drawn from the experience of the "Beloved Community." This experience was a wholly novel phenomenon, and it had to be accounted for in intelligible terms. The community owed its very existence, and the consciousness that it was subject to a divine direction, to its exalted Head, and to a Presence within it that was equally supernatural and personal. (*Note* 6.)

When once this experience had been gained, and its lessons had been learned, things would be brought to the remembrance of the disciples that our Lord had said, and of which they were able to make but little at the time. We cannot better describe St John's memories of the great discourses of our Lord in the Upper Chamber than by saying, that they contained what in later days he had come to recognise as the foretellings of the very steps that were to be taken by himself and the others after the removal of their Master from their sight.

A glance at the chapters, xiv.-xvii., will show that they are, as has been truly said, "strikingly Trinitarian." The main theme of xiv. is the revelation of the Father; of xv. of the Son, the true Vine; of xvi. of the Paraclete; while xvii. raises the mind to the thought of the glory of a unity which was before the world began. And it was all to be learned,

as indeed it was learned, not by any acuteness of the intellect, but by the heart, through the fellowship of mutual love.

This is not the place to dwell at length upon the doctrine of the Trinity. If it were, we should rejoice to show how, though it was no consciously designed speculation of the intellect, it has proved to be the teaching about God which has best met and answered the questionings of philosophic minds. It has, moreover, increasingly been found to be in harmony with the scientific view of the continuous ascent of the stages of life through the simple to the more complex. And yet further, it has served not only to throw light upon the mysterious constitution of the individual, but has sanctified his strivings after a social order in which alone he can be fully himself. (*Note* 7.) We need not wonder that Charles Kingsley, who was certainly no mere traditionalist, should have declared that, "If the doctrine of the Trinity is not in the Bible, it ought to be," for, as he said, "the whole spiritual nature of man cries out for it."

NOTES

1. We cannot well maintain, as some have done, that our Lord was the originator of the method of teaching by parables. The germs of such a method are to be found in the Old Testament, and the probability is that it was employed in the synagogue. But it may be legitimately doubted whether any other teacher had used it in so finished a form, and on so extensive a

scale. The earliest rabbi who has been claimed as in any degree doing so is the famous Johanan ben Zakkai, who flourished just before and after the destruction of the Temple, that is to say, some years after the time of Christ.

What is very remarkable and significant is the entire absence of parables from the early Christian writings. Not even our Lord's immediate disciples ventured to imitate Him in this respect. It would seem to have been agreed that it was more fitting not to attempt to reproduce a style of instruction which the great Master had specially made His own.

The following is interesting as indicating the estimate of the parables on the part of two men of our time who were no mean judges of literature. It occurs in the *Memoir* of Lord Tennyson, Vol. i. p. 325.

"The Parables—'perfection beyond compare,' he called them. I heard a talk on them between him and Browning, and Browning fully agreed with my father in his admiration."

2. Given as "The dictum of Ishmael ben Elisha (c. 110 A.D.)," by Dalman, *The Words of Jesus*, p. 210.

3. Dalman, whose authority in this matter is not questioned, is quite decided in speaking of "the incorrectness of the idea that the relation of God to the individual was not set forth until the New Testament revelation." "Of course," he says, "the individual Israelite was aware that it was only as a member of his people that

he possessed the claim to, and prospect of, God's help and patronage. But the Old Testament shows abundant traces of the conviction that God's providence is directed, not only to the people as a whole, but also to every single member of the nation."—*The Words of Jesus*, p. 189.

4. Dalman, writing of the name "Father," says that "Jesus adopted this term for God from the popular usage of His time."—*op. cit.* p. 188.

5. The practical signification of the great words "Our Father" was set forth once and for ever in the Lord's Prayer. That prayer is rightly described as the Pater Noster. It is "Our Father" writ large. In the shortened form in which St Luke records it, the essentials of its structure are revealed. There it is reduced to its five fundamental petitions. The first two speak of the things which a parent ought to ask from His children—Reverence, and Submission; the last three of the things which the children have a right to expect from their parent—Support, Forbearance, and Protection. (For a fuller exposition the author may refer to his little book, *The Church Catechism Explained*, Cambridge University Press.)

6. The following passages may be taken as indicative of the line of thought that was advocated by Professor Royce:

"The common sense of the Christian Church had three problems to solve. First: It was loyal to the universal spiritual community:

and upon this loyalty, according to its view, salvation depended. But this universal community must be something concrete and practically efficacious. Hence the visible Church had to be organised as the appearance on earth of God's Kingdom. For what the parables had left mysterious about the object and the life of love, an authoritative interpretation, valid for the believers of those times, must be found, and was found in the visible Church.

" Secondly : the life, the unity, the spirit of the Church had meanwhile to be identified with the person and with the spirit of the risen and ascended Lord, whom the visions of the first disciples had made henceforth a central fact in the belief of the Church. The supernatural being whose body was now the Church, whose spirit was thus identified with the will and with the mind of a community, had once, as man, walked the earth, had really suffered and died. But since he had risen and ascended, henceforth —precisely because he was as the spirit whose body was this community, the Church—he was divine. Such was the essential article of the new faith.

." And yet all this must also be held in touch with that doctrine of the unity, the personality, and the ineffable transcendence of God—that doctrine which was the heritage of the Church, both from the religion of Israel and from the wisdom of Greece. Speaking in a purely historical and human sense, the dogma of the Trinity was the psychologically inevitable effort

at a solution of this complex but intensely practical problem. Loyalty to the community inspired this solution. The problem of the two natures of Christ, divine and human, was also psychologically forced upon Christianity by the problem of the two levels of our human existence."—*The Problem of Christianity*, i. pp. 201-203.

7. The doctrine of the Trinity " alone enables us to think of God as in Himself ' the living God,' apart from and independently of creation." " The higher I go up in the scale of creation, the more complex does the living organism become." " It is only in fellowship we begin to realise ourselves." " It is with delight that we see the ground of this law in the Supreme." —Bishop Gore, *Belief in Christ*, pp. 249, 251, 253.

X

HIS TEACHING ABOUT HUMAN NATURE

In thinking of our Lord as a teacher we have begun, as indeed we could not do otherwise than begin, with His doctrine of God. It will be natural and fitting that we should next go on to consider His doctrine of Man. There have been religious devotees who in their search after the knowledge of the Divine have seemed to be less and less interested in the ordinary affairs of common life, and to have become increasingly out of touch with the great mass of men and women around them. And some of them have been ready to take credit to themselves, and to regard this withdrawal and lack of sympathy as an evidence of a growth in spirituality.

The least understanding of the Christ of the Gospels is enough to convince us that this type of saintliness is far removed from that which has a right to claim the sanction of His name and His example. Never was there a life lived in such intimate and unbroken communion with the unseen and eternal; never was any teacher and worker more closely and continually in vital and helpful contact with the life of His time. If we had only the parables to go by, we should know how carefully He

watched all that went on. Not a thing escaped His observation ; the flower of the meadow, the snake in the grass, the birds of the air, the signs of the weather, the mending of nets, the sowing of the corn, the search for the treasure, the habits of courtiers, the cares of the household, the children at play—He noticed them all. (*Note* 1.) Certainly nothing that was human was alien to Him. And He was not content to be an observer only—He mixed and took part in it all. If there were any to whom He seemed more especially drawn, they were the simple folk who would be called the "common" people. (*Note* 2.) It was from them that He chose His friends and most trusted associates. He did not refuse invitations to social and festive gatherings, indeed He joined so freely in them that He incurred the severest strictures of many. There were those who raised their eyebrows, and wondered that He could find such satisfaction in the company of publicans and sinners.

And in all this there was no trace of any sense of inconsistency. We are made to feel at every turn that it was His knowledge of God that gave Him the clue to the meaning of earth and of all that is in it.

Not that it could be imagined that He was unmindful of, or indifferent to, the presence of evil. He saw it and exposed it continually. He "knew what was in man," and was sadly aware of the uncleanness and mischief that could arise from the human heart. He understood the peril, and the urgent need of deliverance. His attitude could never have been mistaken for compliance and compromise. (*Note* 3.) "I call that man a brave

man," said James Garfield, "who will look the devil in the face and call him devil." This Christ never hesitated to do, even when the evil one appeared in the disguise of the most popular and powerful leaders of religion, or spoke through the seemingly reasonable appeal of a much valued disciple.

But our Lord's hatred of evil never made Him the less appreciative of the worth of man. It was occasioned in no small degree by His abiding conviction of that worth. He moved amongst men like a good and wise physician, quick to detect the symptoms of harm, untiring in His battle against whatever was injuring bodies and souls, undaunted in His belief in the possibilities of remedy and cure.

He was like the gardener who lifts up from the footpath the rusty bulb which another, ignorant of its real nature, might kick disregardingly aside.

St Augustine said a true thing when he declared that God deals with us, not as we are, but as we are becoming. No words could better describe the doctrine and method of Christ. For Him, human nature was of infinite value on account of its hidden potentiality, its capacity for a higher than any mundane order of life. For Him this capacity existed, and sometimes at its greatest, in those who gave the fewest indications of what they were destined to be. Someone has beautifully remarked that His favourite words were, the *lost*, the *least*, and the *last!* Where opportunities had been fewest, He often recognised the most promising soil.

Among the lessons which Christianity has taught the world none has been more distinctively its own

than this of the value of personality. (*Note* 4.) That is only another way of saying that this is a lesson which we have owed to Christ. He taught it by His every look and word and act. It was seen and felt in the sympathetic concern with which He regarded human beings of every degree; in the reverence with which He treated them, and in the patience and consideration with which He guided the development of their minds. Apart altogether from externals of rank and position, His glance penetrated to that within which held the promise of worth and nobility.

It was a new lesson that He thus exemplified and enjoined; so new that the new word, *agapé*, had to be found to express it. Love, as our Lord showed it and commended it, is the respect and affection that must inevitably follow from faith in the divinely implanted possibilities of human nature, and the divinely given provision for their fulfilment. (*Note* 5.) It was a "new commandment" when He made it the sign and condition of Christian discipleship; and, so wonderful are its applications and surprises, that it appears scarcely less novel and astonishing when we see it in operation to-day. But this at all events we are bound to say—no account of Christ's teaching about human nature can be approximately true that does not put first and foremost His high and sacred sense of its immeasurable worth in the scale of the values of the universe.

So far, then, we have been speaking of one type of teacher from whom our Lord was clearly to be distinguished—the teacher in whose eyes human life

and its interests are only secular and unlovely. But we are no less bound to speak of the contrast which He presented to another type of thinker and worker, from which He was equally removed. He bore no resemblance to the generally accepted pattern of a social reformer and political leader. The age in which He lived could have provided a plentiful list of wrongs and grievances, and might have suggested the projects which would have filled a most notable programme. He would have found many ready to follow Him if He had announced anything of the kind. Indeed, at His first appearance He had been welcomed as the leader that had been long expected, who was to proclaim the popular demand, espouse the cause of the poor, and give a new turn to the national fortunes. It was when nothing of all this seemed to be happening, when opportunities were allowed to slip by, and more and more was said of the duty of renouncing worldly ambitions, of the futility of relying upon force, and of suffering persecutions gladly, that murmurings began to be heard which before long turned to active disgust.

We are bound to direct attention to the difference between the line thus adopted by our Lord and that which was expected from Him, not only because the disillusionment which followed at the time led to the most tragic results, but also because it is only the plain truth to say that a like disillusionment has been experienced by many in the past, and will undoubtedly be experienced by not a few in our own time. There is no use in disguising the fact that those who employ the name and authority of Christ in support

of any particular theory as to the readjustment of the relations between interests and classes, or in behalf of the claims of any one form of government as against another, are inviting serious disappointment. It was not that He held these things to be indifferent or unimportant; but He knew that they could only be rightly and safely attained when they were sought by those who had learned to look for the root cause of life's evils within, and who were content to believe that what is needful of material good will most surely follow where a sincere endeavour is made to give a first place to spiritual ideals.

We are not likely to have forgotten how all this was expressed with unusual candour and skill, in Professor Peabody's remarkable volume *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*. It will be enough to recall a few of his characteristic sayings. On the one hand he is quite clear that "Nothing could be more contrary to the teaching of Jesus than the vulgar notion that He diverts attention from this world and fixes it on another."

On the other hand, it is important, he says, to realise that "The teaching of Jesus does not pretend to cover the whole range of the social question. He recognises that the problem of adjusting social environment must be a new problem with each new age; it concerns itself, therefore, with the making of persons who shall be fit to deal with the environment which each new age in its turn presents."

"The social teaching of Jesus Christ is this—that the social order is not a product of mechanism but of personality, and that personality fulfils itself only in the social order."

"The beginning of social amelioration is in the recognition of that personal responsibility which the Bible does not hesitate to call sin." "For a very large part of social disorder, the chief responsibility lies in the passions and ambitions of individual men, and no social arrangement can guarantee social welfare unless there is brought home to vast numbers of individuals a profounder sense of personal sin." (*Note* 6.)

But if at first, and on a superficial view, any one should be inclined to suppose that our Lord's teaching is discouraging to those who would devote themselves to works of philanthropy and the improvement of the conditions of life, a deeper understanding of His purpose, and a fuller knowledge of the history of the Christian ages, will show that there is really no cause for such a fear. It was the doctrine of Christ that made the continuance of slavery impossible, and that doctrine must sooner or later revolutionise and transform the life of any people and society in which it is sincerely accepted.

To quote Professor Peabody again: "The problem of social justice does not grow out of the worst social conditions, but out of the best. It is not a mark of social decadence, but of social vitality." In other words, it is the fuller life which comes with Christianity that works like a ferment to make for radical changes, and to produce ameliorations such as we can only discover within that area of the world in which the name of our Lord has been a power. (*Note* 7.) Beyond doubt there is much more to be achieved if only we could have a revival among us of applied Christianity after the pattern of the teaching of

Christ. What might not be done to upraise our educational standards, to make us eager to remove whatever stigma of degradation still attaches to any class of honest employment, to humanise the relations of capital and labour, to get rid of slums and to abolish the belief in force? What would not a real understanding of the Christian message do to put heart and hope and courage into all workers for the good, and the beautiful, and the true; whether the work be that of the Church or the school, the hospital or the studio, the office or the factory, the Law Court or the Council Chamber? (*Note* 8.)

There is no department or occupation of our life that would not take on a new interest and dignity, that would not be invested with a new charm and gladness, if only we might view it as Christ viewed it, *sub specie æternitatis*. For Him the worth of human life was great just because its destiny was not to be accomplished here. His measure of the wholesomeness of social conditions was the degree in which they hindered or furthered preparation for an existence of which we can as yet only know the suggestions and anticipations. He was not indifferent to the body and its needs; but He made it plain that a man's true life does not consist in the abundance of the things that minister to these. If we are to be His disciples, we must think of human nature as He thought of it; we must work continually for its relief and upraising as He did, realising always, as He realised, that the things of the spiritual kingdom must come first; and this in the interest of men themselves, inasmuch as the improvement of the soul is the soul of improvement.

NOTES

1. "Sufficient justice has not always been done to Jesus as poet; that is to say, to His use of life in order to bring out what is truly individual, and at the same time universal in it."—Prof. Granger, *The Soul of a Christian*, p. 166.

"We see Him on the mountains, and by the sea and river; we gaze with Him at morning and evening glow, sunrise and sunset; we hear Him speak of plants, the fig tree, the mustard plant, the vine, the thorn bush, the thistle, the lily, the reed, wheat and tares; of animals, the eagle, the dove, the raven, the cock, the hen, the sparrow, the sheep, the lamb, the goat, the calf, the ox, the ass, the dog, the camel, the wolf, the fox, the swine, the serpent, the scorpion, the viper, the fish, the fly, the moth; of metals, gold, silver, brass; of minerals, salt.

"He sees with a sure glance the most characteristic element in these things, the shaking of the reed in the wind, the differences between the small seed and the large mustard tree, the formation of the buds of the fig tree, the rise of the sap in the stalk, and in the growth of the wheat-plant; He sees the sprouting of the blades and of the ears which bring forth fruit. He also takes delight in a loving observation of the animals."—Otto Frommel, *The Poetry of the Gospels*, E.T. p. 54.

"Is there another teacher of those times who is at all so sure that God loves bird and flower?

The Greek poet Meleager of Gadara—not so very far removed from Jesus in space or time—has a good deal to say about flowers, but not at all in the same sense as Jesus, not with any feeling such as His for the immortal hand and eye that planned their symmetry, and their colours and sweetness."—Dr Glover, *The Jesus of History*, pp. 32 f.

2. "We keep honour for intellect and culture, accounting them the elements which vivify the dull man. To Christ it seemed otherwise. If we may judge His mind from His words and His life, the poor, for Him, hold a very different place in society. They represent, not the dull and mechanical members, but the spiritual part of man's being; while intellect and culture stand for the mind and the senses: these have their place, but it is not the highest place. The highest blessing is for the poor; they are blessed as the natural heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven." —Peile, *The Reproach of the Gospel*, p. 108.

3. "He nowhere says that disease is salutary and that evil is a blessing. No! disease He calls disease, and health He calls health. To Him all evil, all misery, is something terrible; it is part of the great realm of Satan."—Harnack, *What is Christianity?* p. 60.

4. "It is beyond dispute that neither the universality nor the unity of human personality, its two most obviously essential features, were adequately understood in pre-Christian ages;

though stoicism was beginning to pave the way for their recognition. But the advent of Christianity created a new epoch both in the development and recognition of human personality."—Illingworth, *Personality, Human and Divine*, p. 14.

5. "Love, friendship, good-nature, kindness carried to the height of sincere and devoted affection will always be the chief pleasures of life, whether Christianity is true or false; but Christian Charity is not the same as any of these, or all of these put together, and I think if Christian Theology were exploded Christian Charity would not survive it."—Sir James Stephen, *Nineteenth Century*, June 1884.

6. *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, pp. 106, 113, 102, 116.

7. The influence that Christianity has had upon the world was thus described by Mr Gladstone:

"Christianity produced a type of character wholly new to the Roman world, and it fundamentally altered the laws and institutions, the tone, temper and tradition of that world. For example, it changed profoundly the relation of the poor to the rich, and the almost forgotten obligations of the rich to the poor. It abolished slavery, abolished human sacrifice, abolished gladiatorial shows, and a multitude of other horrors. It restored the position of woman in society. It proscribed polygamy, and put down divorce, absolutely in the West, though not

absolutely in the East. It made peace, instead of war, the normal and presumed relation between human societies. It exhibited life as a discipline everywhere and in all its parts, and changed essentially the place and function of suffering in human experience. Accepting the ancient morality as far as it went, it not only enlarged but transfigured its teaching, by the laws of humility and of forgiveness, and by a law of purity perhaps even more new and strange than these."—Review of "Robert Elsmere," *Nineteenth Century*, May 1888.

8. "If it be said that the problems which the coming generation will have to face, problems of wealth and poverty, of luxury and want, of capital and labour, of population, of class, of national responsibility, of peace and war, are to be solved irrespectively of the Faith, I can only reply that if I am a Christian, I must bring every interest and every difficulty of man within the range of my religion: that I must believe that as it is Divine so it is inexhaustible: that I must proclaim at all cost—bearing sentence, as I shall do, against my own inconsistency and unbelief—that its supremacy extends to all social organisations, to all civil compacts, to all imperial designs, no less than to all doctrines of God and the single soul."—Bishop Westcott, *Social Aspects of Christianity*, pp. 5 f.

XI

HIS TEACHING ABOUT THE INDIVIDUAL LIFE

Among the signs and symptoms of the present time there is one which we may rightly regard as specially healthy and encouraging, if indeed it is not too much to say that it is the most healthy and encouraging of them all. This is the fact that men and women are everywhere asking to be shown Christianity as it originally was to be seen in the character and mind and practice of its Founder; in short, they are asking for the Christianity of Christ. We must never think of resenting the appeal to the actual teaching of our Lord. Rather we must welcome it and continually, and most seriously, make it ourselves.

But, when we are eager to learn afresh what that teaching was, let us remember that our reality and enthusiasm are quite likely to be subjected to tests more exacting than any we are prepared to expect. We have been recalling to mind two of the elements of the teaching of Christ—His doctrine of God, and His doctrine of human nature. We are now to consider His aims and directions for the individual life. It will be clearest and most practical to do this under two heads.

In the first place, let us think of Christ's law of

Service. There can be no doubt about the emphasis with which, both by word and example, He ever insisted upon the duty and dignity of service to God and to the neighbour. Quite plainly He said, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." "I am among you as He that serveth." And as unmistakably He laid it down—"He that would be the greatest among you, let him be the servant of all"; "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done."

Perhaps we do not sufficiently realise that this was a teaching that was new to the world. The thought of service, as our Lord understood it, had no special charm for the ancients. Greek civilisation and culture were built on a basis of slavery. It is significant that in the Greek language the word for "evil" (*poneros*) was derived from a word which meant "hard work." According to the Hebrew conception of life there was more to be said in favour of work. "Six days shalt thou labour," was a commandment that applied to all. The worst account that could be given of a man was to say that he was a "son of Belial," a man without use, a useless fellow. But it is true also that the Jew looked upon the necessity of work as part of the punishment, the curse, which had resulted from the Fall; and that, in his dreams of the ideal state, he saw himself sitting under his vine and his fig tree, while the Gentile was hewing his wood and drawing his water.

It was left to Christ and the Christian to preach and to illustrate the blessing of work.

"My Father worketh hitherto," our Lord said, "and I work." Accordingly, the Master in the

parable gave to his servants their appointed tasks. It was "to every man his work." This was to be the rule, and there were to be no exceptions. No place was to be left in the Kingdom for those who were deliberately and by their own choice unemployed.

But we have not fully entered into the Christian conception of service if it is thought of only as a duty, however willingly undertaken. For a Christian, work is more than a duty; it is a privilege. At first hearing, no doubt, it sounds paradoxical to be told that it is through service alone that we can enter into the enjoyment of liberty. Yet a deeper insight reveals to us the certainty of this astonishing truth. Freedom is not the achievement of a moment. It can only come with the liberation and full development of all the higher faculties; and these can only be developed by active exercise and accepted discipline. Hence it is that God's service is "perfect freedom."

This being so, we are enabled to appreciate the meaning of our Lord's teaching as to the faithful servant's reward. Here again, at first, it may seem strange to be told that the reward of work is more work; but, if it is in work that we attain to union with God, and to the fullest realisation of our powers, then we need not marvel that the faithful servant should be rewarded by being set over ten cities, and that in the apocalyptic description of the perfect state we should be told that, though "they rest," yet nevertheless "they rest not day nor night," since "their works follow with them"; for "His servants" here "shall serve Him" there, and,

as it is significantly added, "they shall see His Face." So true is it that the path of service is the way to glory.

It ought not to be difficult to see how such an estimation of the dignity and value of service must tend to irradiate the most ordinary life, and to give nobility to the humblest occupations. "Who sweeps a room as with this clause, makes that and the action fine." And does it not follow that there can be no Christian civilisation, properly so called, where this conception of service does not prevail?

We should be ungrateful if we did not perceive that as a people we have made some progress in this direction. We have seen how at a crisis there was no uncertain response to the call when it was sounded for service. But we cannot be blind to the fact that there is still a great deal that we have to learn. We are not yet fully convinced that idleness is as dull and as stupid as it is wicked; that a life which is wholly devoted to pleasure is, to say no more of it, an intolerable tax upon the good offices of others; and that, as has been well observed, the difference between a rich man and a poor man is really only this, that a rich man has been prepaid to do his work, and is therefore doubly bound to do it. There is too much of the lingering delusion that it is genteel to have nothing to do. On the other hand, we have still to learn the mischief of the notion that it can be sound economy that a worker should aim at doing as little as possible, and getting as much as he can for doing it. Work will only be good work, and happy work, when it is ungrudging and wholehearted. (*Note* 1.)

But we may not suppose that, when we have learned to accept and rejoice in the law of service, we have gone all the way that Christ sought, and still seeks, to lead His disciples. If we are sincerely willing to be taught by Him, we must understand that He would have us to follow Him, not only along the road of service, but on the yet higher path of *Sacrifice*.

When we think of service, we think of doing. Sacrifice is more than doing ; it is giving. And it is giving of that which it costs most to give ; giving of self, surrendering of one's own way and will and wish and, ultimately it may be, of one's own life. That is the meaning of sacrifice.

Now most people will agree that there is nothing in the world harder than this. We none of us naturally like the thought of giving up. As children we did not as a rule enjoy sharing our toys with others. We much preferred to keep them to ourselves. We certainly disliked having our wills crossed, and our wishes denied. And the desire to be unselfish does not for most of us increase as the years go on. No doubt the time comes when we are bound to admit that there must be some giving up, some mutual concession, on the part of all, if society is to be held together ; but we are inclined to regard this as a disagreeable necessity, to be avoided as far as can be ; with the best possible grace, of course. The idea that sacrifice is in itself something not to be feared but welcomed, not to be accepted grudgingly but willingly, even with gladness, is an idea for which we find it difficult to make a place, and above all the leading place, in our scheme of living.

And yet there is not one of us who is not aware that there are facts and experiences which, if we allowed them their due weight, might incline us to quite opposite conclusions. We are bound to admit that selfishness, so far from being a way to blessing, is in truth the bane of existence. Our selfish days are our least happy days; and there are times when we suspect that it may be no exaggeration to say that "hell is self-indulgence." Then, too, we know that we are compelled to admit the nobility of a life that has been devoted unreservedly to a great cause, or unhesitatingly given to save the life of another. Even when we have to acknowledge that we are not ourselves capable of such conduct, we make the confession with a sigh, and half wish it were otherwise.

And there is a further discovery that we can hardly fail to make. We may not be able to explain why it should be so, but the fact is not to be questioned that there is a strange power which flows from self-sacrifice.

Most truly has it been said, "It is difficult to explain why egoism is in reality a cause of weakness; that is to say, as soon as an individual's own self is felt to be the main object of his attention, he ceases to influence us, and after a time even to interest us. The more self-centred he is, the less hold he has on others, and the more they disregard the 'self,' which to him is everything. Conversely, when anyone is found literally never to think about himself, he at once becomes supremely interesting to others; and if his own claims are never pressed, but he is known to be swayed solely by consideration for others, at once a power goes forth from him, and that which no

amount of self-assertion would win for him, is easily conceded. In art the same principle is to be discerned. Everywhere self-suppression is a power." (*Note* 2.)

These facts of our constant experience ought to help us to understand the teaching of our Lord as to the necessity and power of sacrifice.

This, beyond question, is what our Lord asks from His disciples. Indeed, it would not be easy to give any account of the Christian spirit and temper, that could be accepted as satisfactory, which did not include this amongst its most marked characteristics. (*Note* 3.)

The world has never witnessed any example of self-sacrifice that can be set side by side with the sacrifice of Christ. And yet, as we all know, He made it as plain as words could make it that He meant His disciples in all ages to follow in His steps. He said to them all, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." (*Note* 4.) It was in sacrifice that service was to be raised to its highest power.

When we see the influence which a life of self-forgetting can exercise to-day, we begin to get an insight into the secret strength of that most compelling of all attractions that have ever been felt in human history; for then we realise, if only a little, the meaning of the words—"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die." And He had explained that this was but an instance of a great and universal law of influence. "Verily,

verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit. He that loveth his life loseth it." So certain is it that He would have us to realise that the soul grows rich in giving. A life that is self-contained, and intent only upon its own preservation, is narrow and unprofitable.

We have said that there are experiences which come to us all to prove to us the misery of selfishness. Let it not be forgotten that there are also glimpses of joy and of recompense that follow upon acts of unselfishness. If only we could believe it, there are wonderful lessons which the most ordinary among us may hope to learn. It was a wise teacher who bade his pupils remember that "life is first a sacrifice, and then a miracle."

May it be that the greatest of all life's surprises is to come at its end? There is nothing that, as a rule, men and women dread more than the actual process of physical dying. What if we have yet to learn that our bodily dissolution ought even to be welcomed as the means of the final self-surrender through which we are to pass to a knowledge of realities that could not be otherwise possible?

Most of us must feel our unworthiness to talk about these high and sacred matters; but in all humility we are bound as Christians to say to ourselves and to others that the way of self-sacrifice is not to be faithlessly dreaded and timorously shunned. While we have no right to rush presumptuously into it, we may not decline it when it is set before us.

NOTES

1. "It is the message of the New Testament that work is a duty which is incumbent upon all, that the members of a Christian community should aim at giving rather than getting, and that they should seek the service of others rather than the personal profit of themselves."

"It is important for the Church to insist that the duty of personal work is incumbent on all, that idleness, and institutions which encourage idleness, whether among rich or poor, are wrong; that the primary function of industry is social service, not merely personal gain, that a man is bound to judge his economic activities not by the profits which they bring to himself, but by the contribution which they make to the well-being of others; that it is wrong to take advantage of the necessities of the public or of private individuals to drive a hard and profitable bargain, that it is wrong to adulterate goods or to charge exorbitant prices for them; that an industry which can only be carried on by methods which degrade human beings ought not to be carried on at all; that property is not held by absolute right on an individual basis, but is relative to the good of society as a commonweal; that if an institution is socially harmful, no vested interest is a valid plea for maintaining it."

"It is possible that society may have to choose between being Christian and being rich,

as in other ages men have had to choose between Christianity and prosperity, comfort, or life itself."—*Christianity and Industrial Problems* (Report of Archbishops' Committee of Inquiry, after the National Mission), pp. 17 f.

2. Dr E. Lyttelton, *Sermon on the Mount*, pp. 68 f.

3. "There can be no doubt that Jesus demanded self-denial and self-renunciation to a much greater extent than we like to think."

"Were Christ to preach among us to-day, He would certainly not talk in general terms, and say to every one, 'Give away everything you have'; but there are thousands among us to whom He would so speak, and that there is scarcely anyone who feels compelled to apply these sayings of the Gospel to himself is a fact that ought to make us suspicious."—Dr Harnack, *What is Christianity?* pp. 87, 85.

4. "The cross is the outcome of His deepest mind, of His prayer-life. It is more like Him than anything else He ever did."—Dr Glover, *The Jesus of History*, p. 188.

XII

THE WAY OF REDEMPTION

The path to which the Great Teacher pointed was that which He always chose for Himself. He was pre-eminently the Servant and the Sufferer. As we fix our eyes upon the vision of Him, we are inevitably reminded of the description that was given in the later Isaiah ; and we need not have any hesitation in believing that it was often in His thoughts. Indeed we know that it was to this book of the prophet that He definitely turned when He stood up to read in the synagogue, at the opening of His ministry, among His fellow townsmen of Nazareth. He did this although He was well aware that the popular expectation of the Messiah had been built up with materials among which the conceptions of humiliation and rejection had no place. How soon the exact road He had to tread became evident and plain to His consciousness we are not able to say. We can scarcely suppose that the knowledge of what was before Him can have been long delayed.

Let it be granted that it was only a painter's fancy which saw the shadow of a cross made by the out-stretched arms of the wearied youth as He rose from

His toil at the carpenter's bench; yet the thought that prompted the fancy was thoroughly justified. We may be sure that in those hidden years of quiet He was being prepared for the demands which were to be made upon Him, and which could only be met out of slowly accumulated stores of patient endurance and disciplined power. It must soon have become evident that His choice would have perpetually to be made between personal comfort and satisfaction, and the completion of the work He had been given to accomplish.

No doubt that choice had been made long before the great trial and test of the Temptation in the wilderness. Then the question to be decided was, not of the goal to be aimed at, but whether or not the road to be followed should be that of entire dependence upon the Father's will and care. We know how He passed through the ordeal, indignantly refusing to be turned from His course by privation, or monotony, or by the offer of a compromise that promised success on easier terms than those of absolute devotion to the highest service.

If the Temptation marked a determining stage in our Lord's ministry, may not the same thing be said of another most important occasion in His career? We are accustomed to think of the Transfiguration as a manifestation of great value for the strengthening of the faith of the disciples. We need not question that it was so. But when we have said this, do we feel that the explanation is entirely adequate for an event of such magnitude?

May it not be that in the Transfiguration we ought to recognise that once again it was a question of the path to be chosen? Was it not His due, if He desired it, that an entrance should be abundantly ministered to Him into the heavenly kingdom, without His having to undergo the painful experience of dying? Have we not the suggestion of this in the appearance of the two messengers, saints of the Old Covenant who had themselves been mysteriously removed from the earth? It is significant that their conversation with Him should have been concerned with the departure, the "exodus"—that is the word in the original Greek—which He was to accomplish? We can see why the offer was not to be accepted. Had He accepted, it must have been for Himself alone. The door which closed behind Him would have left outside an unredeemed humanity, hopelessly struggling in the fetters of evil, and plunged in the darkness of the shadow of death. (*Note* 1.) What might have been possible for a single saint was not possible for Him in whom were bound up the destinies of all mankind. And does not all that followed confirm the belief that we have here reached a turning point, a summit from which the road was to descend rapidly until it led Him into the deepest depths of humiliation and suffering? We can understand why it was that at such a moment the Voice of approval should sound from heaven, and why silence should be enjoined upon the bewildered companions who had been permitted to witness the scene. It is certain that from that time He Himself set His face with unflinching resolu-

tion to go to Jerusalem full of the thought of the sufferings that lay before Him.

His disciples could only follow Him with feelings of astonishment and awe. We can well understand that they must have found it difficult to reconcile His amazing submissiveness with the strength and courage which they had never found wanting in Him. Nor has this blending of qualities ceased to present a problem of which many are painfully conscious to-day. As a matter of fact, the patience of the Sufferer has been emphasised to so great an extent that the stronger aspect of His character and action has for the modern mind too often been obscured. The result has been to produce an impression which is as untrue as it is prejudicial.

The picture of the lacerated and thorn-crowned victim has been so drawn as to suggest nothing more than passive surrender to overwhelming physical force; so that the adventurous and brave-hearted have been puzzled by the spectacle, and driven to ask whether they must not look elsewhere for the courage without which they rightly feel that the ideal of true manhood is not complete. What has been far too often overlooked is the real nature of our Lord's submission. To understand this it is of the first importance to remember that He was not yielding only to material might. He had submitted to the forces of evil and wrong when they had craftily and skilfully enmeshed Him in the toils of a procedure which, however malicious it might be, was lawfully authorised and technically correct. Our Lord had never quailed before mere force,

whether of man or devil. He had more than once refused to surrender to a mob. But it was otherwise when, behind the physical force, there stood the august authority of law. We should think far less of Socrates if he had defied his judges and struggled with the gaoler when he brought him the deadly draught. There is a greater courage that yields, and accepts the issue as determined by Higher Hands. And our Lord did not submit without protest. He was silent only when He had been tried and sentenced by all the responsible authorities in turn. He had done what He might to ensure the safety of His associates, but He would not break through the appointed order for the sake of saving Himself. He was no rebel. He had always conformed to the requirements of the law. (*Note* 2.)

The highest courage is not that which depends upon the rush of excitement or the stimulus of applause; but that which can hold its own in stillness and in the face of seeming defeat. We mark His calm under provocation, as His enemies distort His words and load Him with the grossest indignities. It is no Stoic indifference of cultivated insensibility. We are certain that He feels it acutely, and yet no hasty retort springs to His lips. So true is it that "In the face of danger self-restraint is after all the highest form of self-assertion." (*Note* 3.)

It is this perfect blending of patience and strength, of endurance and nobility, that makes the central Figure of the greatest of all tragedies so appealing and majestical. "If the death of Socrates," so Rousseau is reported to have said, "was the death of a man, then the death of Jesus was the death of a

God." That, too, was the thought of the soldier who witnessed the scene on the Cross. (*Note* 4.)

But, when we have satisfied ourselves as to the magnanimity and courage of the Sufferer, we are still left with the problem, Why was it that He was thus content to suffer and endure? What was the purpose which required and justified His submission and passion? We cannot wonder that all down the centuries men have brought their utmost powers of thought to bear upon the investigation of that problem. It is not possible to view these sufferings as if they constituted an isolated event, or as if they merely affected a single individual. They were of so unique a nature that they must be regarded in their relation to history, and as holding a special place in the ordering of the Providence of God. (*Note* 5.) What did it all mean? Why was it necessary? How came it to be that this cup might not pass from Him? Speaking generally we may say that two replies have been made to these questions; and each can be expressed by a single word.

The first is the word *Revelation.*

"Sic Deus dilexit mundum"—so stands the explanation above the figure of the crucified Saviour over the altar-piece of St Paul's Cathedral—This is how God loved the world. In that sentence we have the primary clue to the meaning of the Cross. And in it we have stated also the first secret of its amazing power. We must not forget that these words in St John's Gospel followed immediately upon the reference to the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness. (*Note* 6.) We can have no difficulty in recognising

the significance of the parallel. What is wrong with human nature is that it has been poisoned by the venom of the lie of the crafty traducer of the great Author of our being. "He does not care, is cruel, is not to be trusted, and need not be obeyed." That is the horrid doubt, the deadly insinuation. Once admitted and received, its effects are inevitable. It produces coolness and indifference, then antipathy and antagonism, and at last a hatred that has in it the fire of hell.

There is but one antidote to the lie, and that is the truth. It has only to be shown and seen that "there is no sacrifice that God has not made for man," and the miserable and fatal falsehood is exposed. The misunderstanding is removed, and a new set of shuttles begins to weave a new nature within. Those are indeed right who tell us that "there is life for a look at the Crucified One." By the Cross is the knowledge of God, Whom to know is to live. Therefore it was that "even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life." The first purpose of the Cross, then, was to give to mankind the supreme manifestation of the love of God.

And yet, though the word Revelation tells us much, it does not tell all. We still need another, and that other is *Redemption*.

When St John the Baptist had seen that our Lord had no sins of His own to confess, as He entered the stream with the multitudes, he was driven to the mysterious conclusion that He must be "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." He

Himself told His disciples that He had come " to give His life a ransom for many " ; and, shortly before His death, He instituted a sacred rite to take the place of the old memorial of deliverance, and to symbolise and consecrate the " new covenant " in His " blood shed for many for the remission of sins."

There is in some quarters to-day a strange unwillingness to accept what is described as the " transactional " view of that which happened on the Cross. It might have been supposed that such a view must on any careful consideration be found to be inevitable. We cannot be permanently satisfied with an account which represents the Cross as only an appeal and a display. In other words, it must have made a difference. Great issues must have been decided by it.

What these issues were we can only understand in part. It has been wisely said that, " to understand fully the Atonement were to understand these three things and their ultimate relation to each other—the greatest thing in God, which is His love ; the strongest thing in the universe, which is law ; and the darkest thing in man, which is sin." (*Note* 7.)

But, although we must acknowledge our insufficiency to judge, there are some aspects of the great situation which are not entirely beyond our ken. We may feel that we are not using language that is wholly vain and unmeaning, when we say that, before there could be any abiding at-one-ment, the infinite love of God must be met and responded to by confession and reparation on the part of man ; that all must be done in a way which would leave no un-

certainty as to the guilt and heinousness of sin ; and, yet further, that there must be a decisive defeat of the forces of evil, accomplished in the way which would be most effective—perhaps, in the only possible way—by an exposure and discomfiture that these forces should bring upon themselves. (*Note* 8.)

We are wont to speak of a great difficulty as a "crux." We must realise that the Cross itself was the solution of the greatest of all difficult problems. It was

> "by no breath,
> Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation
> joins issue with death."

The task of Redemption was in very truth a work that was "worthy of a God."

We sometimes wonder, perhaps, what one of the dwellers in the ancient world would make of the changes that he would see if he were to appear amongst us to-day, and which of them all would strike him as the most extraordinary. Might it not well be that nothing would be to him more startling than the attitude adopted and the feeling displayed towards the Cross? He would remember how his own contemporaries thought of the new religion which dared to offer such a sign and symbol of its faith. The whole world has not often been so unanimous about anything as it was then about this. Jews and Greeks and Romans differed from one another in almost every conceivable way, but on this matter they were all agreed. They could not endure the sight of the Cross. The Jew recoiled from it with

a religious, a superstitious dread. The Greek shrank from it as rude and horrible. To the Roman it stood for nothing but infamy and shame. It was not by a mere accident that the title of scorn over the Cross on Golgotha was written in their three languages. It expressed unmistakably their disgust and dislike and disdain.

The visitor would remember all that, and what would he find ? Turn where he might, he would see the Cross honoured and admired. He would see it hanging as a cherished ornament from the neck of the fairest, floating proudly on the flags of our navies and armies, set on our ambulances, lifted high above our altars and churches. To his amazement he would learn that every objection has vanished : the religious objection, the intellectual objection, the social objection, all have disappeared. Amongst the most progressive peoples of the world to-day, it would be clear to him that the Cross is regarded with reverence as the emblem of that which is most sacred and most strong.

We are often reminded in these days of the fact that Christianity has much in common with the other great faiths and religions. Maxims and doctrines are produced which bear a close resemblance to teachings that we have derived from the New Testament, and we are asked what we make of them. Happily we need not be at a loss for an answer. The existence of a truth, wherever it is discovered, strengthens rather than weakens our Christian belief ; for it is an essential part of that belief that God has nowhere left Himself without

witness, and that there is a light that lighteth every man. At the same time, it is only right that we should be reminded also of the fact that there are things which are distinctive of the Christian religion, and to which no parallels are to be found elsewhere. To name but this one, Christianity stands alone in its possession of the Cross. The Cross is distinctive of Christianity, and it is central in Christianity. Indeed, Christianity is itself just in so far as it gives prominence to the Cross.

We may take which of the Gospels we please, and we shall find that before it ends it will set us, in the words of one of them, "standing by the Cross of Jesus."

NOTES

1. This view of the Transfiguration is attractively presented by Godet in his *Studies in the New Testament*, pp. 110 f.

2. It is a mistaken account of our Lord's meaning which represents Him as opposed in all circumstances to the policy of forcible resistance. He respected the character and calling of a soldier; and on the rare occasions when it fell to Him, as inspired prophet, to exhibit Divine indignation within the appropriate sphere, as in the cleansing of the Temple from its traders and their ill-gotten gains, He did not scruple to overturn their tables by force. What He refused to do was to step outside His own appointed path. "Who made Me a judge?"

He said, when He declined to adjudicate as to the division of property.

In this light we shall best interpret His words to Pilate, which have been made to carry a significance that does not properly belong to them. When He said, "My kingdom is not of this world," He was explaining that the position and privileges of an earthly sovereign were not His. Had they been His, He would not have been where He was. "If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews." This it would have been their lawful duty to do. His actions made it plain that He realised that the work of the Prophet was more far-reaching than the work of the Judge or the King; and that this work may be most fruitful under the conditions of seeming failure.

3. T. Hughes, *The Manliness of Christ*, p. 33.

4. "The greatest of all heroes is One."—Carlyle, *On Heroes and Hero-worship*, Lect. I.

5. "If God did not show the depth and tenderness of His love for man and His sympathy with man, and His desire to extinguish in man the very sources and roots of sin, by entering into man's nature and revealing fully what that nature would be when transfigured by the glory of a Divine Presence, the one high light vanishes from human history, and the Divine splendour of the Crucifixion shrinks to the proportions of a mere tragedy of tragedies darkening the whole

story of the world. If the will of God and the will of man did not concur to make the Crucifixion the greatest of all sacrifices, if it was an involuntary catastrophe happening to the most innocent and helpless of human victims, it was rather the despair than the hope of the human race."—R. H. Hutton, formerly editor of the *Spectator* (Exeter Church Congress, 1894).

6. Justin Martyr, in his *Dialogue*, represents the Jew as saying that he had often asked his teachers for an explanation of the serpent on the pole, and that they had never been able to give any.

7. P. C. Simpson, *The Fact of Christ*, p. 152.

8. The following quotations may be given as suggestive of lines of thought for students who desire to consider more fully the doctrine of the Atonement:

"It is only with the greatest caution that the word 'punishment' can be safely applied to the atoning sufferings of Christ." "He did not—of course He did not—endure the vengeance of God."—Dr Moberly, *Atonement and Personality*, pp. 23, 132.

"Vicarious suffering, which on the individualist theory seems so monstrous and unjust as to throw a shadow on the character of God, is easy to understand if we give up our individualism. It is a necessity. For the sinner cannot suffer for his own healing, precisely because he is a sinner. The trouble which he brings upon himself cannot heal his wounds. Redemp-

tion must be vicarious ; it must be wrought by the suffering of the just for the unjust."—Dr Inge, *Personal Idealism and Mysticism.*

" Vicarious punishment is a providential appointment of every day's experience."—Bishop Butler, *Analogy*, Part II.

" A Gospel which merely proclaimed an amnesty would be unavailing, for the satisfaction of the soul's requirements. It would bring no peace ; for such is the constitution of our moral nature that there can be no peace for a sinner unless his sin be expiated."—Dr David Smith, *The Atonement*, p. 175.

It is a pleasure to add a lucid description of the way in which " the Cross of Christ reconciles apparently conflicting tendencies of thought in India."

One of these " regards sin, indeed all action, as inescapable. The effects of sin will track the sinner down." " The last morsel of *Karmic* fruit must be eaten." " Pardon is not possible." " Salvation is out of the question. So serious a fact is sin." " Then there is another stream of thought that maintains the fact of the divine grace, *prasāda*. God loves and He will save ; so that to bathe in the Ganges, or to call on His name within ten miles of the Narmada River, or to sit under the sacred tree of Siva on his birthnight and utter two syllables of his name, will guarantee salvation." " Hardly, indeed, can the two tendencies of thought, broadly expressed by the two words *karma* and

prasāda, be reconciled except in the Cross." " Sin is a serious thing, the most serious fact on earth, inescapable in its consequences, so that those consequences, as in the Parable of the Prodigal, involve the Father infinitely more than His erring son; and in suffering the consequences of sin in the Cross of Christ the love of God has revealed to us sin's sinfulness. The consequences of sin are so serious that even God cannot set them aside."—W. E. Tomlinson, *The East and the West*, April 1923.

XIII

THE WORDS FROM THE CROSS

"THE Cross gives much to say," exclaimed a devout interpreter of the mysteries of the Passion. True as that is, it is even more true that "the Cross *has* much to say." There is always a danger lest we should be so fully occupied in thinking and speaking about the Cross, that we fail to listen to what we can learn directly from it.

A great Apostle has told us that he shrank from using rhetorical language lest the minds of his hearers might be too much attracted to his eloquence, with the result that "the preaching of the Cross" itself would be "made of none effect."

Evidently the Cross was meant to arrest and hold our attention. It stands with its arms outspread for ever appealing to the hearts and consciences of men. Indeed it speaks to us in a most literal and unmistakable way. We have cause to be more grateful than we can say for the fact that we have had preserved to us what we know so well as the Words from the Cross.

It sometimes happened that those who suffered the awful penalty of crucifixion were prevented from uttering, what in most cases would have been words

of blasphemy and execration, by being gagged, or by a yet more brutal method. Our Lord was mercifully spared this indignity, not for His sake alone.

Great importance, as we know, has always been attached to dying words. (*Note* 1.) We may shrink from saying that any of His words should carry more authority and weight than others; yet it does seem that He Himself felt that there were things He could reveal at a later stage that might not have been previously told. In any case we shall not be wrong in expecting to find that His dying words go very deep, and sound for us the profoundest realities of life and death.

We cannot say for certain when the first Word was spoken; whether it was as the nails were being driven through His sensitive flesh, or at the still more terrible moment when the Cross with its quivering burden was shot into the hole that had been prepared to receive it. What we do know is that in the first agony of His torture—agony that we can only describe as "excruciating"—He, who had been silent in His own defence, was heard to speak, pleading the cause of His murderers. That was a new thing in the history of the world. No parallel has been suggested from the ancient classical literature. Nor is there anything like it in the Old Testament. At the most, the saints of the former time had patiently endured, invoking upon their persecutors the certain vengeance of Heaven. Indeed, we can only think of one utterance that so much as suggests the possibility of the first Word from the Cross; and, when we mention it, we are not detracting from, but rather adding to the wonder of that Word.

We ourselves, alas! are all too much accustomed to fall in our practice below the level of the advice we can give to others. With Him alone it was not so. He only was always consistent with Himself. He had said, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you." And what He said He did. He did love His enemies, and wished to do them good. He might not lift His hands in prayer, but He prayed for them not the less.

Men tell us that love is blind. There is a sense in which it is true. Love is blind to the fault and defect, but it is marvellously quick to discover the good, and even the possibility of good. There is no logic like love's logic. Here we are listening to it. He cannot say that they have not done a grievous wrong; no darker deed was ever wrought. What He urges is that their guilt would have been greater had they known more, had they not been the tools of others. They did need forgiveness, and He begs it as a personal favour from the Love that is over them all. "FATHER, FORGIVE THEM; FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO."

The prayer was new when He uttered it, but it has often been repeated since. The world has so far come to expect it from Christians, that it expresses surprise when they fail to exhibit the temper of their Master and to show that they have learned in some measure the first lesson from the Cross.

The more we study these sayings, the more we are impressed by their value as a confirmation of the truth of the history; and the more evident it becomes that they followed each other in a natural,

and indeed a necessary sequence. We have not to wait long for the justification, and still further manifestation, of the Redeemer's love. If ever evil is to be overcome, it must be overcome by good. And love is good in action. Here is an instance of its working. On either side of our Lord there is a malefactor suffering the due reward of his deeds. At first both join in reviling Him, hoping, it may be, to secure the sympathy of the crowd, and possibly their own release. After a while the better feelings of one of them are stirred. He had been a bold, bad man by his own confession. But, even in his brigand days, he had wished to follow the strongest. He has found Him at last. Never had he seen such grace and royal dignity. It was a true thing they had written over His head. He reads the inscription, and shapes his prayer accordingly. The words told of "Jesus" the "King"; so this is his request: "Jesus, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." (*Note* 2.) It is a modest petition, but the faith behind it is not small. He foresees a day when the parts are to be reversed, and when He who now suffers will reign. He ventures to ask that the companion in suffering may not be entirely forgotten.

How will the appeal be received? Will the love that was so ardent on behalf of the many, the mass, the crowd, be equally responsive to the one? We know that it has not always been so; and that, in consequence, the profession of philanthropy has come to be regarded with suspicion. It is so much easier to be moved by a general and, it may be, a distant appeal, than to be interested in the parti-

cular case that is near at hand. How will He act? We are not left in doubt. The response to the request is made without a moment's delay. The Lord Himself says the "Amen" to the robber's prayer. "VERILY," literally *Amen*, "I SAY UNTO THEE, TO-DAY SHALT THOU BE WITH ME IN PARADISE."

Nothing was wanting that could minister hope and impart consolation. There is a beautiful legend which tells that the shadow of the Lord fell across the penitent thief to shelter him from the fierce beating of the sun. But a still better refreshment is promised. "To-day," in the cool of that very day, they should be walking together in the paradise of God. So it is proved beyond question that the love of Christ embraces all because it embraces each. If He yearns for the good of the many, the fulness of His sympathy is not the less entirely at the service of the one.

And there is more to learn. We have seen the action of love at the circumference, so to speak; in its relation to enemies. We have seen it also at work within a narrower circle, in its response to the appeal of a newly made friend. How will it appear towards those who hold the central place of affection, the oldest and dearest, who have been known closest and longest?

Perhaps we are startled by the very thought of putting such a question. We might have supposed it unnecessary, and have imagined that it should go without saying that the most intimate and familiar must be the objects of His tenderest love. Is it not natural that this should be? Undoubtedly it is

natural, but unhappily the least experience of life suffices to show that what is natural does not always happen. This, alas! is the misery of our sinfulness, it makes us unnatural. How often it has been a just ground of complaint that the love and zeal which win so much regard abroad, and are quick to respond to the needs of new friends, are by no means equally ready to expend themselves upon the ministries which are required to brighten the atmosphere and lighten the labours of the home. We know what is said by the world. It says plainly that it has no faith in such devotion as this. Let us look, then, and see what the love of our Lord will be, and do, for His oldest and closest. They are there. In the lull of excitement they have crept up to the Cross. He sees them. They do not ask to be remembered. That they well know is unnecessary. With a glance from one to the other, the need of them both is provided for. The mother ageing fast is entrusted to the disciple who has been specially trained to love. (*Note* 3.)

The Word is spoken—"WOMAN, BEHOLD THY SON; BEHOLD THY MOTHER."

Surprise has sometimes been felt at the seeming coldness of the address. "Woman"—to us, in our language, that may sound distant and strange. But this may not have been the impression conveyed by the term as it was originally spoken.

Perhaps, too, there was a special reason for its use. May it have been that, with delicate thoughtfulness, He purposely avoided any expression that would have revealed the personal relationship with Himself, and might have exposed her to the

rude curiosity or even the insults of the crowd? Or, is the simplest explanation, as so often, the truest? Was it that He could not trust Himself, in that terrible hour, to use the old, endearing term so full of memories? Whatever the motive, of this we can be sure; there was no want of unselfish consideration and most son-like care. (*Note* 4.)

One little circumstance ought not to escape us. The hours were passing, and we are told that He saw her "standing." May He not have wished to save her from the dreadful scenes that He knew were to follow? Did the disciple to whose charge she was committed understand, and act on, the hint that was given? It is significant that it should be added that "from that hour that disciple took her to his own home."

He watched them go; the two He would have most wished to keep by His side to the close. There is no thought of self when it is a question of the well-being of others. So true was it that, "having loved His own, He loved them unto the end."

And "the end," could it be far away? Earthly relationships had now been fulfilled. What remained but that He should commend His soul to God in peace? Alas! to argue thus would be to take too superficial a view of the process of dying. Even our own not uncommon experiences might show us that.

Some of us may have known what it is to watch by the bedside of a passing saint. We have found ourselves in an atmosphere of love and tenderness. The dying man desires to depart in charity with all

men. His thoughts range far as he thinks of one and another. If he is aware of any who have done him an injury, he would have them know that he does not feel unkindly towards them. For others, neighbours and acquaintances, there are messages of remembrance and greeting that he asks to have conveyed. And then he turns to those gathered about him, his very nearest, that he may give to them his last and most sacred instructions. This done, it might seem as if there was nothing to delay the return of the spirit in humble trust and thankfulness to God. But the work of dying is not always so easily accomplished. The room is shaded, and the eyes are closed. There is unbroken stillness. But all is not well. Something is happening within, the meaning of which it is not easy to understand. There is a struggle going on, a last and terrible grapple. It is this that may make the pains of death so formidable. The great enemy of the soul is the meanest of antagonists. He waits to strike his hardest until his would-be victim is weakest. Then he assaults the mind with his darkest insinuations and most terrifying doubts. That is why we are bidden to pray that in our last hour we may not fall from God.

If all this can take place in the case of an ordinary saint, was it likely that it would be otherwise with the King of saints ? with Him who had undertaken to break through the forces of evil and open a way for His brethren to enter the heavenly kingdom ? Well did He know what was coming. It was to be the hour of darkness, in which He was to engage in mortal conflict with all the power of the enemy. The

scene was shrouded, and there was an awful stillness. For three long hours it lasted, and then there rose as from a great deep the most mysterious cry that ever ascended from the heart of man: "ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?" (*Note* 5.) Small wonder if we are not able to fathom its meaning. This, at least, we must do. We must try not to misunderstand it. The words, as we know, were quoted from the beginning of the twenty-second Psalm—the "crucifix of the Old Testament." As they stand in the Psalm they are most certainly no cry of distrust and despair. Those are possibly right who tell us that we ought to render the Greek aorist in its strict sense, as referring to a situation which is already past. In that case the words would read, "My God, My God, why *didst* Thou forsake Me?" The very fact that the mind was able to frame a question may of itself be an indication that the extremity of the crisis was past.

But we soon get beyond our depth in our efforts to comprehend. At the most we can be certain there was a need for the mysterious conflict, and the yet more mysterious consciousness of desertion. For the due accomplishment of His mighty task, as well as for His own discipline and perfecting, it must have been essential that He should drain the cup to the dregs. (*Note* 6.) But where He wondered, we may not imagine that we can fully understand. Enough that upon those dread hours in time our hopes for eternity depend. It is for us to give praise to the Holiest in the height for the unfailing strength of our great Redeemer; and to pray with all our souls that what He was content to endure

for our sakes may indeed avail for us and for our salvation.

If we have already seen cause to believe that the worst crisis of the struggle was over, the next word from the Cross puts this fact beyond question. While the mind is intensely occupied, the body may remain as it were in abeyance. It is only after the battle that the soldier feels his wound. So it was that when the Temptation in the wilderness was over, our Lord "afterward hungered." And so now it is after the conflict in the very fires of hell that He becomes aware of the distress which all the time had been accumulating. Then it is that He, who was so slow to think or speak of His own wants, acknowledges His wish for relief and utters the cry: "I THIRST." Of all known tortures there is none that can be more horrible than thirst. (*Note* 7.) Our Lord at the beginning had declined the draught that would have numbed His sensations and confused His faculties. But, now when the ordeal is over, He clearly has no thought that physical suffering has in itself any moral worth. Still less has He any notion of disguising His weakness, and dramatically acting a part. Quite simply the words are spoken, "I am thirsty"; and quite thankfully He welcomes the refreshment of the moisture as it is pressed to His lips and tongue.

Some have thought it necessary to look for a mystical meaning in this Word from the Cross; but surely it is wisest to take it quite literally and in the most natural sense. Short as it is, its value is immense. The time may come when the thought

of it will bring us more consolation than anything else in the world. There is in it just that touch of nature which makes us aware of our kinship with Him (*Note* 8); and there is also a stamp of veracity that makes it impossible to doubt that the events of which we are reading must actually have occurred.

The next, the sixth, Word from the Cross should not surprise us, though it may be only by degrees that we are able to realise its import and meaning. "IT IS FINISHED." The first thought suggested is that the terrible suffering is at last completed, and that shame and humiliation can go no further. In that sense the word was most true. Nothing more could be added; that which had seemed to be endless had come to an end. But there was more than that. We may be sure that the thoughts of the Sufferer ranged back into the distant past. He knew that, throughout the long history of the Jewish people, preparation had been made and pledges had been given. Hopes had been held out of a mighty Redemption that was to be wrought, and the way had been dimly foreshadowed by mysterious types. Symbols and prophecies had pointed to this day. Now at length the fulfilment had come. *Consummatum est.* All was accomplished.

Even these explanations do not exhaust the meaning of the Word. There was yet another signification that we ought to recognise. Not seldom in the Old Testament language a past tense is used to express such assurance of that which is to happen in the future that what is thus present to faith and hope is accounted as already attained; and things which are not are spoken of as if they already were. Who

can doubt that the eyes of the dying Redeemer looked on across the intervening ages, and that He saw of the travail of His soul and was satisfied ?

We know that it is sometimes possible, when we go over a plan of a military campaign, to put a finger on a certain engagement and say, That was the turning point ; there the issue was decided, and the conflict virtually concluded. Even so we may believe that there was vouchsafed to the great Captain of our salvation the knowledge that the enemy had been routed, and the battle had been won. Not indeed that the campaign was ended. Much fighting had still to be done. Myriads of soldiers would have to be enlisted under His banner, and the evil would have to be dislodged from many a strong position in which it had entrenched itself. Its forces might yet rally for a final onslaught of despair. But the critical moment had passed, and it could be no longer doubtful on which side the victory would ultimately be. The joy of that certainty broke forth in His shout of triumph. For the soldier who heard it there was no mistaking its meaning. He could recognise the ring of the confidence that was in it. The sound was very different from a sigh of exhaustion or a wail of defeat.

There is no need to enlarge upon the fitness of the final Word. Yet we ought to remember that it, too, had its special significance. Some years ago it happened to the present writer to get into serious conversation with a Jew who quite courteously offered to prove to him that our Lord was not what Christians have always held Him to be. The proof was this, His language on the Cross. At the

beginning He had addressed God as His Father ; but later on He had been obliged to confess that He could not sustain the part, and to admit that God had forsaken Him. It might not have been easy to convince the objector that he was mistaken in his interpretation of those words. Happily there was an answer which he was more likely to understand. The obvious reply was to call his attention to the fact that the same Evangelist, who gives us the first Word, " Father, forgive them," gives us also the last—" FATHER, INTO THY HANDS I COMMEND MY SPIRIT."

We must not forget that the word " Father " was deliberately substituted for the title " God of truth," which ended the sentence as it originally stood in the Psalm. The name used by our Lord was that which He treasured the most. We cannot measure all that it meant for Him. He had once said to His disciples, " If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice because I said, I go to the Father." That fulfilment of desire was now to be His.

So the final Word spoke of home, and breathed consecration. Rest had come at last, as He committed Himself, with all that He had achieved, to Him who yearned to receive the offering and the gift. The climax was reached of trust and of service.

Our survey is done. It has been all too rapid. " If I lived to the end of the world "—St Francis is reported to have said—" I should need no other book than the record of the Passion of my Lord." We have to confess the poorness of our seeing, yet we must have seen enough to make it plain why, all down the

centuries, men and women, the strongest and the gentlest, have loved to gather and longed to linger round the Cross of Christ; and why it is that our Good Friday congregations can join, with no sense of unreality, in those lines of one of the finest of modern hymns, and say with uplifted and wondering hearts:

> "Love so amazing, so divine,
> Demands my life, my soul, my all."

NOTES

1. "The tongues of dying men
   Enforce attention like deep harmony:
   Where words are scarce, they are seldom spent in vain,
   For they breathe truth that breathe their words in pain."—John of Gaunt in *Richard II.*

2. Codex Bezæ inserts the words "turning to the Lord" before "he said." We could wish to believe that we have here a record of one of the "eyewitnesses" to whom St Luke refers in his Preface.

3. The inference would seem to be irresistible that the Mother of our Lord can have had no other sons or daughters of her own who would naturally care for her. To use Bishop Lightfoot's words: "Is it conceivable that our Lord would thus have snapped asunder the most sacred ties of natural affection?"—*Galatians*, p. 264.

4. " A Son that never did amiss,
That never shamed His Mother's kiss,
Nor crossed her fondest prayer :
E'en from the Tree He deigned to bow
For her His agonised brow,
Her, His sole earthly care."—*Christian Year.*

5. Probably all the sayings were uttered by our Lord in Aramaic, the original language being preserved here because it was necessary to explain the comment of the bystanders—" He calleth for Elias."

6. Two suggestive commentaries upon the mystery of the dereliction on the Cross, the darkest of all dark nights of the soul, may be given ; one from a well-known University thinker of our own time, the other from a Spanish mystical writer of the seventeenth century :

" From the moment when the cry, ' My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? ' went up out of the deep of the midday midnight upon Calvary, doubt was for ever consecrated as the last trial of the sons of God ; and a trial needed for their purification, no less than pain or parting."—J. R. Illingworth, *Sermons in a College Chapel*, p. 25.

" He who would attain to the mystical science must abandon and be detached from five things : first, from creatures ; secondly, from temporal things ; thirdly, from the very gifts of the Holy Spirit ; fourthly, from himself ; and fifthly, he must be detached even from God."

"This last is the completest of all, because that soul only that knows how to be so detached is that which attains to being lost in God, and only the soul that attains to being so lost succeeds in finding itself."—Molinos, *The Spiritual Life* (quoted by Unamuno in *The Tragic Sense of Life*, p. 219).

7. "Those who have wandered over a fresh battle-field seldom fail to inform us that the one cry of the sufferers there is for water; all the other agony of torn and crushed and mutilated limbs being forgotten in this agony, which exceeds them all. The cry for water swallows up every other cry." — Archbishop Trench, *Sermons Preached in Ireland*, pp. 251 f.

8. "What a comfort it is," said that robust Christian, Norman Macleod, on his death-bed, "to know that the Man Christ Jesus died!"

XIV

THE FACT OF THE RESURRECTION

The first heralds of Christianity based their announcement of the good news upon the fact, to them the incontrovertible fact, that Christ had risen indeed. This they held to be the amply sufficient foundation on which to build their faith in what He is, and their hope of what He is yet to do. Not that they expected to be believed on the strength of their assertion only. They were confident that they had good reasons to give, and when challenged they gave them.

It is well to bear in mind that we have a clear statement of the evidence for the Resurrection in a letter of St Paul which dates from a time at least ten years earlier than any of our Gospels in their present form. The Gospels serve rather to corroborate a conviction already existing than to furnish a reply to the objections of gainsayers. Not the less, but the more, are they valuable as contributing to make assurance yet more sure. There is extraordinary power in these informal narratives, with their incidental happenings and often seemingly contradictory statements; reflecting as they do in a remarkable way the excitement and confusion of those earliest days.

The absence of premeditated design, and the fidelity with which such first impressions are preserved, give us a strong impression that we are reading accounts of actual occurrences. We almost find ourselves back at the moment when the first intelligence began to arrive. We hear of the rumours of the things seen by the women (*Note* 1), which were at once discredited as idle tales; of inquiries by the men, which made it clear that there was more in the story than they had at first supposed; of how the stone had gone, and the tomb was empty; and, what was most startling of all, of how the grave clothes had remained in their original position, with the napkin still in its circular folds, as if the head had been withdrawn without causing disturbance. (*Note* 2.) Then came the appearances, and the tests that were offered; the very marks by which His body could be identified, and by which they were made certain that it was not a mere phantasm they beheld. And then followed the interviews, and the renewal of the old confidences; under the most varied conditions, not for days only, but for weeks. (*Note* 3.) If they had doubted to begin with, every doubt had been met and removed. One conclusion alone was possible for those who had received so "many infallible proofs." By piecing the evidence together we can form a clear idea of how it all took place. As a matter of fact, it is difficult to think that we could have had evidence that would be more trustworthy.

But perhaps it will be said that, if the first disciples needed so much convincing, we can have no right to be surprised if there should be those amongst

us to-day who ask for time to consider, and who insist upon the application of methods of criticism that have more meaning for us than they would have had then. And, indeed, we ought not to wonder, when we remember how much is involved, that every avenue should have been followed which might conceivably lead to some other than the traditional position. Was it a fraud? Had the Body been quietly removed by the owner of the tomb, or perhaps by the gardener lest injury should be done to his flowers or his vegetables? Was the empty tomb the wrong one visited by mistake? Were the appearances inventions, or visions? Is it even possible that the visions may have been Divinely provided? Every one of these hypotheses has found an advocate, in the hope that some way might be discovered by which it would be possible to escape from what seemed the insuperable difficulties of the Evangelists' story.

Happily, some of the old difficulties, which were raised from the side of physical science, have been greatly lessened by the advance in our knowledge of the constitution of matter, and by what we are coming to understand of the control that can be exercised by the moral and spiritual parts of our nature. It is not so hard now as it once was to conceive of the transformation of a materially spiritual body into one which is spiritually material. (*Note* 4.) Happily also, there is now an agreement on all sides that something took place on " the third day " which, however it is to be explained, was the starting-point of a new era and a new faith.

" Whatever may have happened at the grave and

in the matter of the appearances, one thing is certain: *This grave was the birthplace of the indestructible belief that death is vanquished, that there is a life eternal.* It is useless to cite Plato; it is useless to point to the Persian religion, and the ideas and the literature of later Judaism. All that would have perished and has perished; but the certainty of the resurrection and of a life eternal which is bound up with the grave in Joseph's garden has not perished, and on the conviction that *Jesus lives* we still base those hopes of citizenship in an Eternal City which make our earthly life worth living and tolerable."

We owe a great debt of gratitude to Professor Harnack for these words, and it is to be remembered that the italics are his own. (*Note* 5.)

Scarcely less valuable is the testimony given by Professor Schmiedel, a well-known representative of the most extreme critical school. "The followers of Jesus really had the impression of having seen Him. The historian who will have it that the alleged appearances are due merely to legend or to invention, must deny not only the genuineness of the Pauline Epistles, but also the historicity of Jesus altogether." (*Note* 6.)

That there are difficulties in the narratives of the Evangelists, which we may never be able completely to resolve, and that consequences are involved in the belief in the Resurrection such as will always make its acceptance a matter of the utmost seriousness, all this we may freely allow. But that any sufficient alternative has been found, or is likely to be found, for the primitive Christian account of the fact of the

Resurrection, of that we must take leave to be thoroughly sceptical. It is not merely the respect which Professor Gwatkin's pupils have for his knowledge and judgment that would incline them to adopt his words, and say as he did, that they are "fully satisfied" that there is for the Resurrection "as good evidence as for any fact in history." (*Note* 7.)

That being so, does it seem unreasonable to go on to suggest that in one respect we may be still left uncertain and in need of assistance? What is it that is wrong? Simply this, that we do not find it easy to gain a vivid sense of an event that happened in the dim remoteness of a distant past. Perhaps, therefore, it may be worth while to remember that there is a method, which some of us have occasionally employed to bring home to our minds the actuality and inevitability of such an event. We have said to ourselves, What difference would it have made if that event had never happened? A great battle upon which the existence of a nation depended, a notable invention that entirely altered the conditions under which ideas were circulated and knowledge was diffused, a far-reaching reform which gave a new direction to the moral and religious tendencies of an age—how would our world be other than it is, if any of these had never occurred, if there had been no such victory, or no such discovery, or no such revolutionary movement?

Suppose, then—if indeed we can imagine it—our Lord had not risen from the dead on the first Easter morning, that the third day had come and gone, and left things just as they were; in what respects would

our situation and outlook be changed from what we know them to be at the present time ?

There is one difference about which there can be no doubt. That is the difference in regard to the estimate we should have formed of our Lord Himself. We should not be thinking of Him as occupying the unique position which the Christian tradition has assigned to Him. We should have had to be contented with a far less lofty and mysterious conception of His person and office. His claim to be more than man would certainly not have been substantiated. At the most, He would have to be regarded as a very remarkable teacher, who had lived in advance of His age, and had perhaps been too sanguine as to the nature of His mission ; with the result that He had been bitterly opposed and rejected, and had paid the penalty of His nobility of character and ardent enthusiasm, by dreadful sufferings and a martyr's death. We might still have had much to admire and to reverence, but we should not be offering Him the full homage of our hearts as " a Prince and a Saviour." (*Note* 8.)

There are those, as we know, who profess that they would not have been unwilling to accept the alternative, and who have even persuaded themselves that there might have been some real advantage in the change. But they are in a small minority. For most of us the loss would have been irreparable. This attenuated version of Christ could never have appealed with power to the minds and consciences of ordinary people. There is no fallacy more disastrous than the notion that by reducing the level of that which is above us we can succeed in uplifting our-

selves. To have thought of Him as less than He is, would have been to blot out the fairest hope, indeed the only hope, for our sin-stricken and sorrow-laden humanity.

But we need not pursue the argument for a very simple reason. The truth is that, if our Lord had not risen, there could have been no discussion of this kind. We have only imperfectly stated the difference that would have been made by saying that we should be thinking about Him in a different way. What is far more likely is that we should not be thinking of Him at all. Why should we ? He had held no conspicuous office in the political or social world of His day. He was no emperor like Marcus Aurelius, whose wise maxims would have an assured place in the annals of history. His chosen companions were men of humble rank and moderate attainments. To the eye of the secular historian, if He appeared at all, it would be only as a poor peasant belonging to an obscure province in a remote district of the Empire, who after attaining a certain local celebrity had ignominiously perished when for some reason or other His hour of popularity had ended.

True it is that those who had known Him, and received the proofs of His sympathy and greatness, would never have believed Him to have been the misguided deceiver His enemies had declared Him to be. The memory of Him would have lingered for a generation or more, and would have lent a sacredness to a spot here and there by the lake and on the hill. But what likelihood was there that His

reputation would have spread beyond a very limited area ? Even if His immediate disciples could have so far recovered from the dejection into which they had been sunk, and could have summoned up courage to make an attempt to rescue His character from the disrepute into which it had fallen, and to gain a hearing for the truths He had taught ; who were they that they should win the attention of the busy, worldly, world ?

No, indeed ; a little sect of followers might have lingered on, till it had soon disappeared ; a curious scholar might now have been puzzling over the reference in Tacitus ; but for mankind at large He might have never existed.

And who of us has the refinement of skill to make the investigation that could tell what the difference would be if it were possible to withdraw from our civilisation all that it has owed to the influence of the knowledge of Christ ? Who could say how much more hard and material, and vulgar and coarse, the thoughts and actions of ourselves and our neighbours would be at this moment if we could eliminate all the elements of gentleness, and helpfulness, and respect which have come, and still do come, to us from the Christian source ? Who could reckon the men and women who are gladly devoting the best of their powers to the task of uplifting and saving the miserable and the fallen, the seemingly useless, the otherwise hopeless, for whom the old pagan civilisations would have had no thought or care ?

" How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds ! " So we have sung from our childhood. But what if the sound had never reached us ? Happily, again, we

need not press on to a conclusion. Mercifully the thing is not possible even in imagination. The suggestion may be dismissed like the sinister fancy of an evil dream. If for a moment such a gloom could steal over our senses, we should awake with thankfulness to discover that the sun is still shining in the heavens, and that there is hope for the world. Still, if ever we should find it hard to realise the solidity of the foundation upon which the Christian assurance is based, it may help us if we say to ourselves that the fact that Christ rose from His grave is just as certain as it is certain that we ever heard His Name.

NOTES

1. It is most interesting to mark the way in which the appearances of the risen Lord were adapted to the conditions of those who witnessed them. This is remarkably evident in the case of the first of the appearances, that to Mary Magdalene.

"To be suddenly confronted, without adequate warning, with one as alive whom we knew to have been a buried corpse, would be likely to cause so serious a shock as perhaps to inflict a permanent injury to the mental and moral balance of the recipient. It would surely produce at least such a state of bewilderment as would render instruction or dispassionate judgment almost impossible. When we consider the emotional nature of S. Mary Magdalene there seem very obvious reasons why an appearance

from the other world should not be made to her without due precautions and preparations. It is not surely without a meaning that she was first allowed to see the empty grave, and then to see a figure which she takes for the gardener, and then should be led to realise the truth through the utterance of her own name. Then again, the prompt suppression of rapture and sentiment; the extremely practical duty imposed, of communicating what she knows rather than merely dwelling upon it; the effort to enable others to believe; the excessively cooling and sobering experience of other people's incredulity; seem a very significant continuance of the same discipline and watchful exercise of caution." —Dr W. J. Sparrow Simpson, *The Resurrection and Modern Thought*, pp. 86 f.

2. The argument from the disposition of the grave-clothes was described by Arthur Beard, in a pamphlet published in 1873. It was more fully developed by Dr Latham in his *Risen Master* (1901).

3. "A marvellous change had passed over Him. He was the same and yet different. He was known only when He revealed Himself. He conformed to the laws of our present life, and yet He was not subject to them. These seeming contradictions were necessarily involved in the moral scope of the Resurrection. Christ sought (if we may so speak) to impress on His disciples two great lessons: that He had raised man's body from the grave, and that He had glorified it."

"But this Body, which was recognised as essentially the same Body, had yet undergone some marvellous change, of which we can gain a faint idea by what is directly recorded of its manifestations. Thus we find that the Person of Christ was not recognised directly by those who saw Him. However firm their conviction was afterwards that they had 'seen the Lord,' they knew Him first when He was pleased to make Himself known. Human sense alone was not capable of discerning who He was. It could not be otherwise if His Body was glorified, for our senses can only apprehend that which is of kindred nature with themselves."—Bishop Westcott, *The Gospel of the Resurrection*, pp. 110 f., 162 f.

4. "The risen Body of Christ was spiritual . . . not because it was less than before material, but because in it matter was wholly and finally subjugated to spirit, and not to the exigencies of physical life. Matter no longer restricted Him or hindered. It had become the pure and transparent vehicle of spiritual purpose. He rose from the dead (as is apparently implied in the narrative of St Matthew), leaving the gravestone undisturbed. The angel rolled it away to show that He was risen."—Bishop Gore, *The Body of Christ*, p. 129.

5. Harnack, *What is Christianity?* pp. 161 f.

6. Schmiedel, *Encycl. Bibl.* iv. 4061.

7. Gwatkin, *The Bishop of Oxford's Open Letter*, p. 4.

For further accounts of the evidence, the student is referred to Dr Sparrow Simpson's work already mentioned, and to Dr C. H. Robinson's *Studies in the Resurrection.*

8. It is, perhaps, worth while to recall the reply that is said to have been made by Talleyrand to M. Lepeaux, the French Revolutionist, who confided to him the disappointment he and his fellows had met with in their endeavours to gain acceptance for the new religion which they had hoped might take the place of Christianity. He asked for advice as to what he was to do. The apostate bishop agreed that it was no easy matter to found a new religion ; so difficult indeed was it that he hardly knew what to advise. " Still," he said half seriously, " there is one plan which you might at least try. I should recommend you to be crucified, and to rise from the dead on the third day."

XV

THE DEPARTURE AND PROMISE OF RETURN

THE faith and the message of the earliest disciples would have been very different, not only if they had not been convinced of the fact of the Resurrection, but if they had not been confident that their Master was to appear again to establish His Kingdom. There had been a time when they had been distressed beyond measure at the thought that He was going to leave them. Then the outlook had seemed dark, and sorrow had filled their hearts. He had done everything He could do to comfort and fortify them. But the things He had said about gains that would more than compensate them for the loss they were to endure had made little impression upon their minds. Only in the light of subsequent experience could such sayings become intelligible.

Knowing all that we know, we can perhaps see that the situation taken as a whole was plain and inevitable from the first. If we may employ an analogy, it was as though a swimmer were explaining to his lower limbs why his head must rise out of the water while they remained below. It was better for all that it should do so; nay, more, it was essential: for it was only when the head was lifted to breathe

the higher element that life and activity could be fully supplied to the members which had been left in the lower. There would in reality be no separation. The union between the head and the members would be even more vitally effective by reason of the change.

But we must not wonder that it was a hard doctrine to receive. We know how hard it has been, in the history of the Church, to understand that a visible church needs an invisible Head, exalted on high for the benefit of all. If it is difficult for some of us still to grasp the full meaning of this, we ought not to marvel that it was an enigma which the earliest disciples found it beyond their capacity to comprehend. (*Note* 1.)

Most patiently and gently did the Lord bear with their slowness, and seek to enlarge their apprehension. The appearing and disappearing during the forty days must have made them familiar with the fact that He was not far off when for a time He was out of their sight. And a study of the manifestations seems to show that the material aspect became intentionally less marked as the days went on. The disciples were to learn that He was still the same Jesus when they had wholly ceased to be aware of His materially corporeal presence. Thus they were prepared for the great event when, in their view, and under conditions which made an appeal to all their faculties, He did in very deed "ascend to the Father."

We cannot but be aware that belief in the Ascension of our Lord is beset by difficulties which seem to

be most serious to not a few at the present time. It is not only because the Festival of the Ascension falls on a week-day that it attracts less attention than the other great commemorations of the Faith. In a special degree it is concerned with the borderland between the temporal and the eternal, being neither wholly in the one sphere nor wholly in the other. That in itself would make it hard for most of us to think of it as a substantial historical fact. And then, also, we are inclined to suppose that our knowledge of astronomical conditions must render it less possible for us to attach a definite meaning to the clause in the Creed, "He ascended into heaven," than it can have had for those who repeated it without hesitation in the pre-scientific age. Accordingly it is not uncommon to hear it urged that we to-day can only interpret the clause in a symbolical sense; if indeed we ought not to face the question whether we might not do wisely to omit it altogether.

In attempting to deal with this matter, we shall do well to begin by reminding ourselves that our Lord was by no means unconscious of the difficulty, nor was He in the least desirous to minimise it. When certain disciples had murmured at one of His utterances, and had called it "a hard saying," His reply was, "Does this cause you to stumble? what then if ye should behold the Son of man ascending where He was before?" We may gather, therefore, that He would not have us be surprised that this event, perhaps more than any other, should occasion perplexity and misgiving. And we may be grateful for the hint He has left us in the statement that immediately followed: "It is the spirit that

quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life."

Does not such a saying justify us in holding that there is an inward meaning for which we must penetrate beneath the outward sense? Have we not His authority to support us when we maintain that the visible and material can only be rightly understood when it is treated as the sacrament of the reality which it only partially expresses and conveys? Perhaps we have made a mistake in supposing that it is we who have had to discover this mode of symbolic interpretation, and in forgetting that it has been familiar to the Christian intelligence from the earliest days. (*Note* 2.)

There is a very elementary, but profoundly important, lesson that we need to learn and re-learn. This is that the principle of the Incarnation carries with it the belief that the knowledge of the highest truths can be in some measure communicated to us by means of our physical senses. It follows that, in using the language of time and space, of flesh and blood, about spiritual realities, we are not necessarily falsifying the truth. While we must not forget that the material channel can never completely convey the totality that is comprised in the reality, we may be satisfied that it does not distort or misrepresent it. In other words we may have a genuine trust in the report of the senses so far as it can take us. We need not suspect it, or fly from it. It is folly to suppose that we are more likely to reach the absolute verity by purely abstract methods. There is a true sense in which the knowledge and simplicity of the child attain to a vision of things

which may be hidden from those who are accounted the wise. (*Note* 3.)

No one of our scholars was more sensitively and generously sympathetic in his dealings with modern difficulties, or more anxious to secure a just recognition of the place which symbolism should hold in religious thought, than the late Professor Sanday. It is, therefore, interesting to recall the explanation which he gave of the circumstances that attended the Ascension.

"The over-arching sky," he wrote, "is a standing symbol for the abode of God: and the return of the Son to the Father was naturally represented as a retreat within its recesses, the ethereal home of light and glory. It is sometimes necessary that a symbol should be acted as well as written or spoken." (*Note* 4.)

Our wisdom is to accept with cheerfulness the necessary limitations of our present life, while waiting for the fuller knowledge which, as we believe, is one day to be vouchsafed to us. (*Note* 5.) To this hope our Lord had pointed when He bade His disciples be sure that they would yet be guided by His Spirit into all the truth.

What was really essential was that they should not think of Him as in any sense at a distance from them. Accordingly He had left them promises that would come back to them with deepening significance as the years went on. "Where two or three" of them, He had said, were "met together" in His name, they might be confident that He was "in the midst" of them, even "to the end of the world." (*Note* 6.) Their union with Him was to be more vital than any

language about proximity could suggest. He would be in them, and they in Him. "Spirit with spirit" would "meet, closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet." His real, because personal, Presence would be such that in very truth He would be "never so far off as even to be near."

Of all this He gave them a perpetual assurance and pledge in the holy feast which He instituted to their great and endless comfort. In it they were to know that they were partakers of Himself, His very Body and Blood. It was to be to them the continual reminder that He and they were partakers in a common life.

And His promise went further than that. He knew that the chief cause of their grief was the fact that He was to be removed from their sight. He would have them know that for this loss also there would be an ultimate compensation. They were to live in the confident expectation of His return. We do not, perhaps, sufficiently realise that, when He appointed and established the Eucharist, He had made it plain that it was to be, not only a commemoration of the past, and a means of communication in the present, but also a joyful celebration of that which is to be in the future. When they took part in it, they were to look forward to the time when they would eat it new with Him at His royally spread table in the Kingdom of God. St Paul was not forgetful of this aspect of the sacrament when he declared that its purpose would not be accomplished "till He come."

When the question is asked, *How* will He return?

we must be content that the answer should here also be given in the language of figure and metaphor. Much attention has been directed of late to the eschatological utterances of our Lord, as these are recorded in the Gospels. They evidently became more and more prominent as His ministry drew towards its end. It was in close connexion with the announcement of His approaching sufferings that He assured the disciples that "the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father, with His angels." This He repeated with the utmost solemnity, as all the Synoptists tell us, when He was put upon oath at His trial before the High Priest.

No doubt there were statements which suggested that there were to be critical periods which might be regarded as "days of the Son of Man"; but the promise was not the less clear of a "last day" when His disciples were to look for their Lord as citizens welcome a king on his return from a journey, as virgins who go to meet the bridegroom, and as servants who know that they will be called to account for their use of the property that has been entrusted to them.

It was but natural that this language of imagery should have impressed itself vividly upon the records of the earlier Evangelists, and it was fitting that St John should have dwelt at greater length upon other aspects of the Christian hope, which later on it would be desirable to recall into prominence. But it is important to bear in mind, in view of the exaggerated assertions which have been made, that "eschatology is not discarded in the Fourth Gospel." (*Note* 7.)

To the question, *When* will He come ? we are not given an answer ; indeed our Lord told His disciples that the times and the seasons were not for them, nor even for Himself, to know. We may reverently say that there is an element of contingency even in the plans of the Almighty. There are conditions upon the fulfilment of which the arrival of the great event must depend. To one of these our Lord had referred when He said, " This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all the nations ; and then shall the end come."

Uncertainty has its place in the discipline which is required to form the Christian character. There is a special blessing reserved for all who will accept it as a motive for vigilance and an incentive to action. The true disciple is he who shall be found watching and working. It is not an exaggeration to say that at the beginning " the energy of the Gospel was apocalyptic." (*Note* 8.)

Our Christianity to-day would be immensely strengthened, and its power to rise superior to the worldliness, that is always too ready to drag it down, would be vastly increased if the hope of the future manifestation of our Lord were to be quickened amongst us. The thought of His coming can change, as nothing else can, the whole tenor of the present life. (*Note* 9.) It can dignify the most ordinary work by lifting it into the light of His appearing. The anticipation of His tribunal will bring with it a great solemnity, and a much enduring patience. It is good, too, that we should often remember that there are to be new occupations and

enterprises for which our present experiences are the appointed preparation. And, above and beyond all, there is the hope, which for the loyal disciple raises expectation to its highest point—the hope, the certainty, that at last, to use the words of the Epistle which was the postscript to the Fourth Gospel, "*we shall see Him as He is.*"

NOTES

1. This illustration of the swimmer was used with much effect by Father Waggett at one of the meetings of the Pan-Anglican Congress in 1908. The subject of a "Central Authority" in the Church was under discussion. "A man swimming," he said, "is a body without a head from the point of view of the fishes. It is because in the water he is headless that in the water he lives. And if his form below the surface were complete it would presently be dead. A great exaltation of our spiritual activity and spiritual sensitiveness is needed to make the unseen Head effectual for government and legislation. But there is loss, not gain, in hiding the deficiency of organic communion and control by making a miniature whole, with head and members."—(*P.A.C. Report*, Section F., p. 208.)

2. An interesting example of the early recognition of the limitations that are inevitable when the truths of the faith are set forth in the terms of ordinary speech, has been noted as far back as

the fifth century. St Jerome, when interpreting St Paul's words about "foolish speaking" (Eph. iii. 5), gave it as an example that there were those who could dare to say, "heaven is curved like an arch, and a throne is placed in heaven, and God sits upon it; and, as if He were a commander or judge, the angels stand round to obey His commands and to be sent on different missions."—See Bishop Gore, *Belief in Christ*, pp. 320 f.

3. Lord Balfour tells us that the main intention of his philosophical work has been to show that "common-sense beliefs, and science which is a development of common-sense beliefs, are, if not true, at least on the way to truth."—*Theism and Humanism* (Gifford Lectures), p. 148.

Mr Ruskin's warning may be remembered with profit:

"The moment that, in our pride of heart, we refuse to accept the condescension of the Almighty, and desire Him, instead of stooping to hold our hands, to rise before us into His glory, we, hoping that, by standing on a grain of dust or two of human knowledge higher than our fellows, we may behold the Creator as He rises—God takes us at our word. He rises into His own invisible and inconceivable majesty; He goes forth upon the ways which are not our ways, and retires into the thoughts which are not our thoughts; and we are left alone. And presently we say in our vain hearts, 'There is no God.'"—*Frondes Agrestes*, p. 59.

4. Dr Sanday, *Jesus Christ*, Hastings' *D. of B.* ii. 642 f.

5. "I could not assent to any proposal to modify the Creeds, because I believe that our present difficulties are largely due to elements in the intellectual atmosphere of our time which will pass away in the course of one or two centuries —not a long period in the life-history of the Church. The mind of our age is obsessed with physics, as that of some earlier ages had been with metaphysics, and most people are unconsciously influenced by the thought of the physical world as a closed system, incapable of modification by spiritual forces; they therefore think that the uniformities observable in our everyday experience must hold good universally, even though the spiritual conditions be varied. I am convinced that the dualism implied in this conviction will pass away in a relatively short period, and that any modification of the Creeds due to sympathy with those who are influenced by the prevailing tendencies of the moment would be a disastrous blunder."—Bishop William Temple, *Pilgrim*, Jan. 1922.

6. Christians "talk as men who know that the Lord hears them."—Tertullian, *Apology*, 39.

7. Canon Streeter, *Foundations*, p. 207.

8. Dr Nairne, *The Epistle of Priesthood*, p. 232.

9. That the old symbolic language of Eschatology is capable of being rendered into words of which

the strength and beauty may powerfully appeal to-day, is clear from such lines as these :

"Soon the whole
Like a parched scroll
Shall before our amazed sight uproll,
And, without a screen,
At one burst be seen
The Presence wherein we have ever been.

"Oh! who shall bear
The blinding glare
Of the Majesty that shall meet us there?
What eye may gaze
On the unveiled blaze
Of the light-girdled throne of the Ancient of Days?

"Christ us aid!
Himself be our shade,
That in that dread day we be not dismayed."

WHYTEHEAD.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
THE EDINBURGH PRESS, 9 AND 11 YOUNG STREET, EDINBURGH

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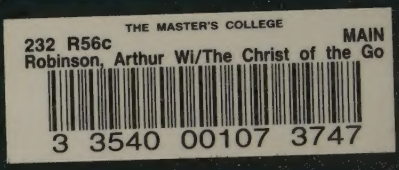
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